

Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

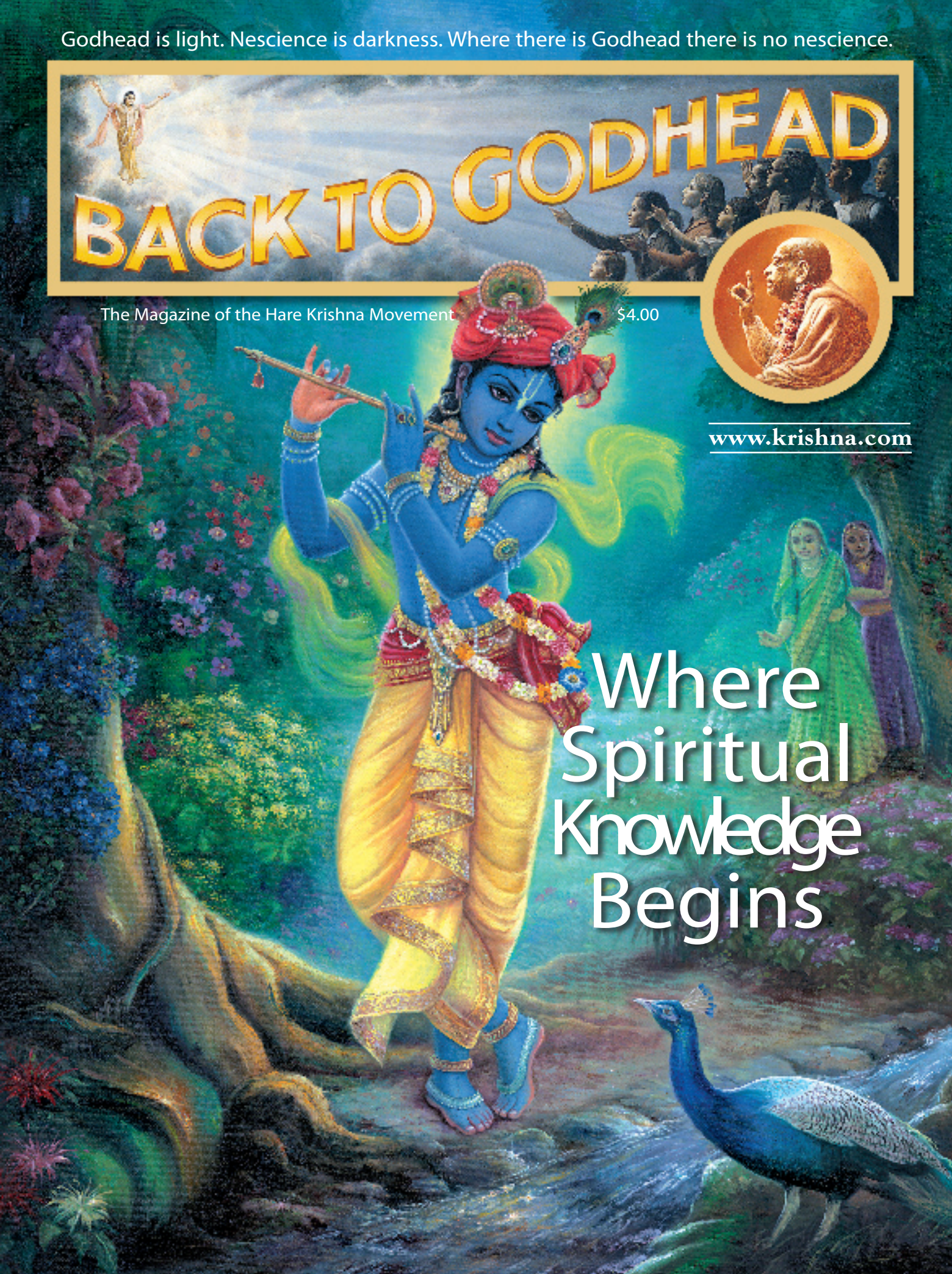
The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

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Where
Spiritual
Knowledge
Begins



Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

Back to Godh

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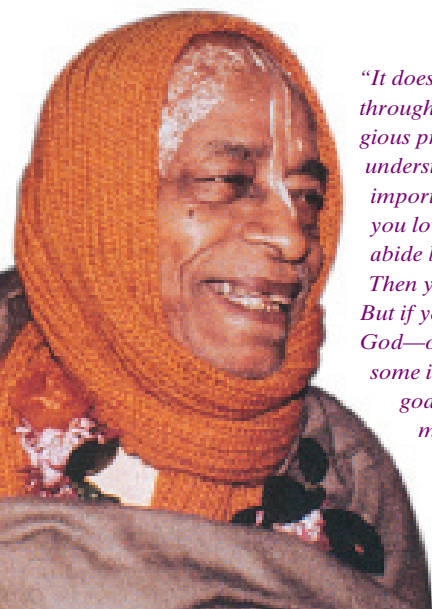
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COVER Ukrainian artist Dīna Bandhu Dāsa produced this painting of Lord Kṛṣṇa for the third volume of the *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* (see back cover) and again for the wall of a new temple in New Zealand. Please see the article on the temple beginning on page 16.



"It doesn't matter through what religious process you have understood God. The important thing is that you love God and abide by His orders. Then you are religious. But if you do not know God—or if you have some imaginary god—then you must learn who God actually is." —p. 15

WELCOME



THIS ISSUE presents articles set in locations around the world, including a new temple in New Zealand, a military base in Iraq, a Gypsy home in Siberia, a college in Belgium, and

various sites from one person's life in South Africa.

The opening of the new Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Auckland was a long time in coming. Janānanda Dāsa tells of the project's history, including the devotees' struggles and their success through cooperation. In Iraq, far from the shelter of any temple, Pārthasārathi Dāsa gives us some insights into what it's like to be a devotee of Kṛṣṇa in the middle of a war zone.

Siberia may not be at war, but it's not overflowing with Kṛṣṇa devotees either. We find out how Indradyumna Swami is received by a group Siberian Gypsies. Passing through life in South Africa, Madhumaṅgala Dāsa was losing his war with the material energy, which had beaten him into complacency. Fortunately, Śrīla Prabhupāda's books came to his rescue.

Nṛtya Kiśorī Devī Dāsī, a young devotee from Israel, tells about her year at Bhaktivedanta College in Belgium, where students get spiritual training in a ministerial program that prepares them for the spiritual adventures of a life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.—Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor



Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and source of all material and spiritual worlds



Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa's most recent incarnation, taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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Hare Krishna Movement



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EDITOR Nāgarāja Dāsa • **ASSOCIATE EDITORS**
Drutakarmā Dāsa, Kālakanṭha Dāsa, Mukunda
Goswami, Satyarāja Dāsa, Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, Viśākhā
Devī Dāsī • **EDITORIAL ADVISOR** Hridayānanda
Dāsa Goswami • **DESIGN/LAYOUT** Yamarāja Dāsa •
PROOFREADERS Keśhanta Dāsa, Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa,
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Letters

Where the Journey Began

In Braja Sevakī Devī Dāsī's article
(November/December 2004) she
used as an illustration the slaugh-
terhouse just off Interstate 5 in
California. Nine years ago I passed
by the same slaughterhouse and
observed hundreds, if not thou-
sands, of cows waiting to die. I was
reminded of the Nazi concentra-
tion camps. It was then I became
a vegetarian. I did not realize it at
the time, but Kṛṣṇa was starting to
awaken my heart and soul.

Through my association with
one of the author's Godbrothers,
Tribhaṅga Sundara Dāsa, I have
grown in Kṛṣṇa consciousness,
highlighted by a visit to Vṛndā-
vana, where I attended the dedica-
tion of the Puṣpa Samādhi [memo-
rial] of their spiritual master, His
Holiness Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, at
Govardhan Hill.

I am thoroughly grateful to
the author for taking me back to
where my journey began.

Ron Wrinkle
Via the Internet

The Soul and Sin

I have read that qualitatively the
soul is like Kṛṣṇa, just as a small
particle of salt is same in quality
as a huge chunk of salt. And since
the soul is qualitatively like Kṛṣṇa,
it has all the qualities of Kṛṣṇa. I
believe that with Kṛṣṇa, there is
nothing like sin. Why then can the
soul sin?

Douglas Bisiw
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: We, the soul, can sin
because we have independence.
We can choose to act according
to our spiritual nature and remain
free from sin, or we can act in de-
fiance of our spiritual nature and
become entangled in sinful life.
This independence, when purified
and used to serve Kṛṣṇa in devo-

tion, gives great pleasure to both
Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Kṛṣṇa re-
spects the right of each soul to
choose its destiny. This is revealed
in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.63) when, af-
ter teaching the whole *Bhagavad-
gītā* to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa tells him, "Do
what you wish to do."

From Pig to Human

Through what deeds can a pig get
a human body? Or a dog? Or any
other living being?

Ruta
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Animals do not per-
form good or bad deeds for which
they get karma to determine a fu-
ture life. They are burning off their
bad karma by accepting animal
bodies. They gradually are promot-
ed from one animal form to another,
being purified of sins, until they
rise to the level of a human be-
ing. Then they once again get the
chance to elevate themselves to
higher planets or the kingdom of
God, to return to human society af-
ter death, or to degrade themselves
and go back down to the animal
kingdom.

Chanting Verses, Chanting Japa

Is chanting important? Every day I
recite verses from *Brahma-saṁhitā*,
Īsopaniṣad, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*,
and Kṛṣṇa verses recited before
lectures in ISKCON. Since chant-
ing these verses is a form of *bhakti-
yoga*, do I need to chant *japa* of the
Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra? Or can I fol-
low my way of doing *bhakti*, or
devotion?

Veerendra Ekbote
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Your chanting of ver-
ses is very beneficial, and you should
keep it up. All the nine limbs of
bhakti free us from sins and bring

us closer to Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Caitanya is the *yuga-avatāra*, the incarnation who came to teach the dharma for this age, which is the chanting of God's holy names. He taught that the chanting of the holy names, as in the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, is the best of the nine processes of devotional service. His followers generally would chant the mantra a fixed number of times around their beads.

It is best to accept a spiritual master who is a follower of Lord Caitanya and chant the *mahā-mantra* under his direction rather than to construct your own practice. Śrīla Prabhupāda was such a great devotee that he engaged in deity worship and organized a Rathayātrā ceremony even as a child, but still he accepted a spiritual master and chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra under his direction. So you also should accept a guru in the line of Lord Caitanya and practice as the guru advises. Since you already have a relationship with ISKCON, it would be wise to find a guru who is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and who can help you to follow Prabhupāda's instructions.

Chanter's Destination

If someone only chanted the *mahā-mantra* on *japa* beads, and never read anything on Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, etc., or offered a flower, leaf, or fruit to Kṛṣṇa—or anything at all that a lay devotee normally does—what would be the outcome in the life after death? Would that person go to a heavenly abode or be reincarnated (through ignorance) as a lower life form?

Nigel Sunderland
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: One whose devotion is incomplete generally takes birth as a human being to get a chance to complete it. This is explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* verses 6.40 through

6.45. If one only chanted the *mahā-mantra* on *japa* beads, he could become so pure that he would spontaneously follow the other principles as well, assuming he chants without intentionally committing offenses to the holy name.

It is possible that temporarily the person may live in heaven, but ultimately he would take birth here and get another chance.

Beards and Hair

What, according to the sages, is the significance of not cutting the beard and growing one's hair?

Kevin Elius
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: Generally persons trying to realize their nature as spiritual souls do not want to spend unnecessary time taking care of the body. Regarding the hair and beard, this is done in one of two ways: (1) always shaving off the beard and hair so you do not have to worry about them, or (2) just letting them grow, without taking unnecessary care of them.

Since cleanliness is an important part of spiritual life, Śrīla Prabhupāda preferred the first method for his disciples.

Loose Friends

Some of my friends have totally different morals than me—sleeping around at the age of sixteen, drinking, taking pot, things like that, and it really bothers me, as it goes against Kṛṣṇa views. I do respect them as people, but the question is, do I still remain friends with them? I think I do, but I'm not too sure.

Carolyn Hightower
Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: As devotees we are friends with everyone, but we associate intimately only with
(please turn to page 58)



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WHERE SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE BEGINS

Real spiritual knowledge is available only to qualified students who hear from authorized teachers.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*arjuna uvāca
ye śāstra-vidhim utsrjya
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa
sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ*

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā
dehinām sā svabhāva-jā
sāttvikī rājasī caiva
tāmasī ceti tām śṛṇu*

*sattvānūrūpā sarvasya
śraddhā bhavati bhārata
śraddhā-mayo 'yaṁ puruṣo
yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*



“O son of Bharata, according to one’s existence under the various modes of nature, one evolves a particular kind of faith. The living being is said to be of a particular faith according to the modes he has acquired.”

—*Bhagavad-gītā* 17.1–3

A*rjuna uvāca* means that Arjuna inquired from Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the teacher, and Arjuna is the student. That is the process of spiritual advancement. As it is indicated in the *Vedas*, *tad-vijñānārtham*. *Tad-vijñānārtham* means “To understand

that transcendental science,” *gurum eva abhigacchet*, “one must take shelter of a guru.”

The method of understanding transcendental science cannot be manufactured. Those who manufacture it are not bona fide. The guru teaches the regulative principles from *śāstra*, authorized scripture. That is a guru. A guru cannot be just anyone. He must be an *ācārya*, one who knows the regulative principles or the directions given in the *śāstra*. He behaves in terms of the *śāstra* regulative principles and teaches his student in the same way. Such a person is called an *ācārya*. He knows

“Arjuna inquired: O Kṛṣṇa, what is the situation of those who do not follow the principles of scripture but worship according to their own imagination? Are they in goodness, in passion, or in ignorance?”

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: According to the modes of nature acquired by the embodied soul, one’s faith can be of three kinds—in goodness, in passion, or in ignorance. Now hear about this.

Left: The Vedas state clearly that to understand the transcendental science one must hear from a bona fide guru.

***In the mode of goodness one's brain is clear
and one can see things as they are.
No hazy understanding, but clear understanding.***

• • •

the purport of *śāstra*, he himself behaves according to the terms of the *śāstra*, and he teaches his disciple in the same way. *Evaṁ paramparā-prāptam* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2]. That is the process.

Arjuna is asking, “There are many who do not follow the principles of *śāstra*, but they have some faith. What is the result of such a mentality?”

Ye śāstra-vidhim utsrjya: “Not following the *śāstra-vidhi*, the regulative principles mentioned in the *śāstra*,” *yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ*, “they make someone a guru or incarnation or this or that. What is the result of such activities?”

This is a very important question, because there are so many pseudo, so-called gurus. They do not know *śāstra*, nor do they follow its principles. Still, they gather some people. The world is full of such non-bona-fide gatherings. But people have faith in their so-called gurus and so-called meditation. This is going on.

What is the result? It is a very important question. Such people have faith, but it is misguided. *Teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa*: “Kṛṣṇa, how is that blind faith defined? And what will be the result of it?”

The question is whether one's faith is in *sattva-guṇa* [the mode of goodness] or *rajo-guṇa* [the mode of passion] or *tamo-guṇa* [the mode of ignorance]. Because without coming to the platform of *sattva-guṇa*, nobody can advance in spiritual life. Just as nobody is allowed to enter the law college unless he is a college graduate. That restriction is there. Otherwise, how will the person understand law? He must be a graduate.

Similarly, first of all one has to come to the platform of *sattva-guṇa*. Then spiritual knowledge begins, because spiritual knowledge is above *sattva-guṇa*. *Sattva-guṇa* is the best

quality. In *sattva-guṇa* one's brain is clear and one can see things as they are. No hazy understanding, but clear understanding. *Sattva-guṇa* is the qualification of the *brāhmaṇa*.

There are three *guṇas*. We should always remember that. The material nature is working under three *guṇas*, three divisions. The example is that of fire, smoke, and firewood. Everyone knows that from wood, fire will come out. And when you ignite wood, there is smoke first of all. And then the flame comes out. Someone may say that the fire, the smoke, and the wood are all one. No. Although they are in some sense one, you require the flame, not the smoke or the wood. You can't say, “Now I have the wood. My work is finished.” No. From the wood, when you get fire, then you can work. You can cook, you can get heat, you can get light—so many things. Similarly, although there are three modes of nature and they are in some sense one, for spiritual advancement one needs to be in *sattva-guṇa*. Therefore, in our Society we first of all try to reform the fallen soul, bringing him to the stage of flame, or the mode of goodness.

Without there being flame, you cannot work. It is not possible. It is a very practical example. We want flame. Just like *yajña*, sacrifice. We perform fire sacrifice, but we want to see that there is flame, not smoke, although smoke is the same thing, being part of the fire. You cannot be satisfied: “Now there is smoke. It is all right. There is fire.”

Without fire, there cannot be smoke. When there is smoke, one can understand there is fire, even if it is far away. When smoke is coming from the forest, then we can immediately understand that there is a forest fire. But although smoke is an indication of fire, it is not fire.

VAGUE IDEAS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

Similarly, in so-called meditation, so-called spiritualism, and other concocted ideas there is some touch of spiritual life, but that is not spiritual life. One should understand. That is not spiritual life. It is called *ābhāsa*. *Ābhāsa* means dawn, when there is not darkness but the sun has not yet risen.

Arjuna's inquiry is very nice. “Those who are not following the *śāstra-vidhi*, the direction of the *śāstra*, but who have some faith, some vague idea—will their position be taken as *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa*, or *tamo-guṇa*?”

Now Kṛṣṇa will reply. It is mentioned here, *śrī bhagavān uvāca*: “The Supreme Lord said.” Kṛṣṇa may be taken by low-grade persons to be an ordinary human being, as it is done sometimes. Big, big scholars, big, big philosophers—they also become bewildered. In India there is a party called Ārya-samāja. They accept Kṛṣṇa as a very big person but not God. There is sometimes that mistake. *Avajānanti mām mūḍhāḥ*: “Those who are rascals sometimes take Me as an ordinary human being.” That is mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.11].

Kṛṣṇa is Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, when there is an authoritative judgment required, you'll find in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the words *śrī bhagavān uvāca*. That means you cannot defy this judgment. Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead is speaking, that is final. No argument. No comment. This is the meaning of *śrī bhagavān uvāca*.

Vyāsadeva has purposefully written here *śrī bhagavān uvāca*: “Bhagavān, the Supreme Person, the ultimate,

said.” *Bhagavān* means the ultimate. When the judgment is given by the Supreme Court, that is final. And when there was monarchy, the order given by the king was final—no more questioning. Similarly, when it is mentioned, *śrī bhagavān uvāca*, that means it is final. No more argument, no more logic. Logic is there, argument is there, but this is final. No waste of time anymore. What Bhagavān says, that is called *paramparā*, disciplic succession. The first utterance—or order, or statement, or judgment—is given by the Supreme Lord, and if that is followed through the disciplic chain, that is real understanding, real knowledge.

OUR PROPORTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

We are very minute parts and parcels of Bhagavān. According to our position, we have got our knowledge, we have got our understanding, proportionately. Both a big fire and a small spot fire are fire, but you cannot compare the small fragment of fire to the big fire. That is not possible. You cannot compare the big ocean to a small drop of water from the ocean. Because the taste of the small drop of ocean [representing the individual, minute soul] is the same as that of the ocean [the Supreme Soul], the Māyāvādī philosophers conclude, “I am the same as the Supreme.” They have no common sense to understand that the small drop of water, although of the same quality as the ocean, is very small.

Because we are minute, our knowledge is imperfect. We are qualitatively one with God, but because we are of very small quantity, our power, our knowledge, everything—is proportionately small. You must first of all understand that: we are simultaneously one with and different from God. “One” means qualitatively one. A small particle of gold can be called gold, but it is not the gold mine. The rascals think, “Because I am gold, I am as good as the gold mine.” No. That is not true. The gold mine is very big, powerful, of immense value. We should not forget this.

IGNORANT LIKE ANIMALS

Kṛṣṇa says that there are three kinds of faith for the *dehinām*. *Dehinām* means the possessor, the owner, of this body. The owner is different from the body. Those who are under the conception that there is no owner and the body is everything are less than *tamo-guṇa*. They are actually animals. In the *śāstra* they have been described as animals. The dog is thinking, “I am this body,” and a man is also thinking, “I am this body.” Then where is the difference between the dog and the man? When a man comes to understand that “I am not this body; I am soul,” then knowledge begins. Before that, he is ignorant like an animal. *Yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke* [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.84.13].

Now, to come to the real platform of knowledge, cultivation is required. Suppose somebody has said—the same example—that there is fire in wood. So if you simply remain satisfied with the wood—“There is fire”—that is called *tamo-guṇa*, not developed. Again, when there is smoke, that is another platform. But when one appreciates the flames, that is *sattva-guṇa*. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says here, *tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā dehinām sāvabhāva-jā*. If one is cultivating his life like that of the hogs and cats and dogs, if his behavior is like that and he remains in that position, then his faith is not equal to the faith of one who is advanced—who is worshiping the deity, bathing three times a day, chanting mantras, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. That is not possible, because one is situated in *sattva-guṇa* and the other is situated in *tamo-guṇa*. Although persons in the darkness of ignorance, in *tamo-guṇa*, have their faith, that faith is in the lowest status of life. It will not help them for spiritual realization. Therefore Kṛṣṇa says, *tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā dehinām sāvabhāva-jā*. *Svabhāva-jā* means natural. One whose body is not yet purified remains in the status of *tamo-guṇa*, or ignorance.

Therefore we have to change. A diseased man can become healthy provided he follows the medical rules

What Is the HareKṛṣṇaMovement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millenniums ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya’s movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṛ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedgehog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for Kṛṣṇa say KRISHNA, for Caitanya say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or His great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean “servant.” For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means “servant of Kṛṣṇa.”

One may finish this course of spiritual understanding even in this life, simply by understanding Kṛṣṇa.

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and regulations. But if he does not follow the rules and regulations, he remains diseased. Similarly, one cannot think, “I have now become free. I can talk and behave nonsensically, and still I am spiritually advanced.” That is not possible. *Sāttvikī rājasī caiva tāmasī ceti tām śṛṇu*. What are the symptoms to know that one is situated in *sattva-guṇa* or *rajo-guṇa* or *tamo-guṇa*? The symptoms are also mentioned. The symptoms of *sattva-guṇa* are the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*. Those are given in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The qualities are mentioned there, so you have to test for them.

In chemistry, there is analytical study to determine whether a substance is pure or not. Every chemical has its characteristics—its color, its formation, its taste, so many things. Chemists know how to test for them. When the test confirms the characteristics of the chemical, then it is accepted as pure, and it can be used for a specific purpose. Similarly, in cooking, the taste is different depending on whether or not the ghee is pure.

People are controlled by the three modes of material nature, and if they do not follow the śāstric injunctions, then they will concoct ideas according to their position, whether in *tamo-guṇa* or *rajo-guṇa* or *sattva-guṇa*. One who conducts himself under the influence of the same modes of nature he has naturally adopted from birth will not be successful in spiritual life.

Everyone gets a particular type of body. One may say, “This body is very nice. That body is not so nice.” Why do we get different bodies? Because of our association with material nature. The living entity falls from the spiritual world. There is the example of Jaya and Vijaya, the gatekeepers of Vaikuṇṭha who fell to this world. There is the possibility of falling. If you do not stick to the spiritual principles, even if you are in Vaikuṇṭha

you will fall down. What to speak of souls in the material world. No contaminated soul can stay in Vaikuṇṭha. The contaminated soul will fall.

Jaya and Vijaya became *asuras*, demons, when they fell from Vaikuṇṭha. But they became *asuras* under specific circumstances. That is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Diti, the wife of Kaśyapa Ṛṣi, was very lusty during dusk. She wanted to have sex with her husband. He said, “No, this is not the appropriate time.” But she was so lusty that she obliged him to have sex with her, and as a result two *asuras* were born.

We have to take so much care. You see? Everything must be done with consideration of time and circumstances. Therefore the Vedic principles include *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*, the purification process undertaken before begetting a child. To beget a child also requires reformation. One has to consider the time, one’s mentality, and so on. Not like cats and dogs. By creating a background of *sattva-guṇa*, the parents will beget a child who will become a great person or a great devotee.

Everything has a proper way to be done, and guidance is given by *śāstra*. Whatever you do, follow the śāstric injunctions.

SPARKS FROM THE FIRE

An example is given to show the influence of *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa*, and *tamo-guṇa* on the soul. Just as the soul falls to the material world, a spark from a fire may fall away from the fire. Depending on where the spark lands, the result will be different. The spark may fall onto dry grass. Then there is a chance of igniting a fire in the dry grass. That is compared to the soul influenced by *sattva-guṇa*. If the spark falls onto the ground, for some time it looks like fire, but it becomes extinguished. That is *rajo-*

guṇa. And if the spark falls into water, it is immediately finished—no more fire. That is *tamo-guṇa*.

Those in *tamo-guṇa* are hopeless. One who remains in *tamo-guṇa* has no chance of coming out to become fire again. Therefore the process is to bring one from *tamo-guṇa* to *rajo-guṇa*, and from *rajo-guṇa* to *sattva-guṇa*, and then to surpass *sattva-guṇa*. That is the spiritual platform. If you stick to the *tamo-guṇa* principle, then there is no hope of spiritual realization. There is only hope of becoming hogs and dogs. One’s life is finished.

Those trying to come to the platform of spiritual realization, God realization, must stick to the *sattva-guṇa* principle. Otherwise it is hopeless. Or it is not hopeless—nothing is hopeless. But it will take a very, very long time. Therefore in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.19] you will find the statement *bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate*: “After many, many births, when one is actually wise . . .” Wise means on the *sattva-guṇa* platform. “Then he surrenders to Kṛṣṇa.” Then spiritual life begins. And one may finish this course of spiritual understanding even in this life, simply by understanding Kṛṣṇa.

*bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaṁ sarvaṁ itī
sa mahātmā su-durlabhah*

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.”

Everything is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Try to understand *Bhagavad-gītā* very nicely, and even in this life you can finish your job of spiritual self-realization and go back home, back to Godhead. Thank you very much. 🌸

Glossary



Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally “the place of the guru”).

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kirtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see “Godhead”).

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādi—one who regards the Absolute as ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally “mercy”).

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—“chariot festival”: a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, “the Lord of the universe”).

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning “opulent” (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas*.

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see “Godhead”); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Receiving And Giving the Holy Name

*The glory of the Lord's holy name
is confidential knowledge that must
be passed on to others with care.*

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

This is the sixth in a series of articles on offenses to be avoided when trying to progress spiritually by chanting God's names. This article discusses the offense of telling faithless persons the glories of the holy names.

AMONG THE MANY presents I received for my sixth birthday were several pairs of heavy red stockings. Like most children, I preferred toys to clothes—especially duplicate clothes. So I ran to my room and pouted. Like any good mother, mine told me to return to my guests, smile, and say, “Thank you,” regardless of how I felt about the gifts.

We commonly show what value we place on things by how we treat them. If I respect the gift or the giver, I place the object in a position of honor or give it to someone I care for. Giving what I have received to an unworthy person or throwing it carelessly into storage shows my lack of regard for it and may invoke the displeasure of the giver.

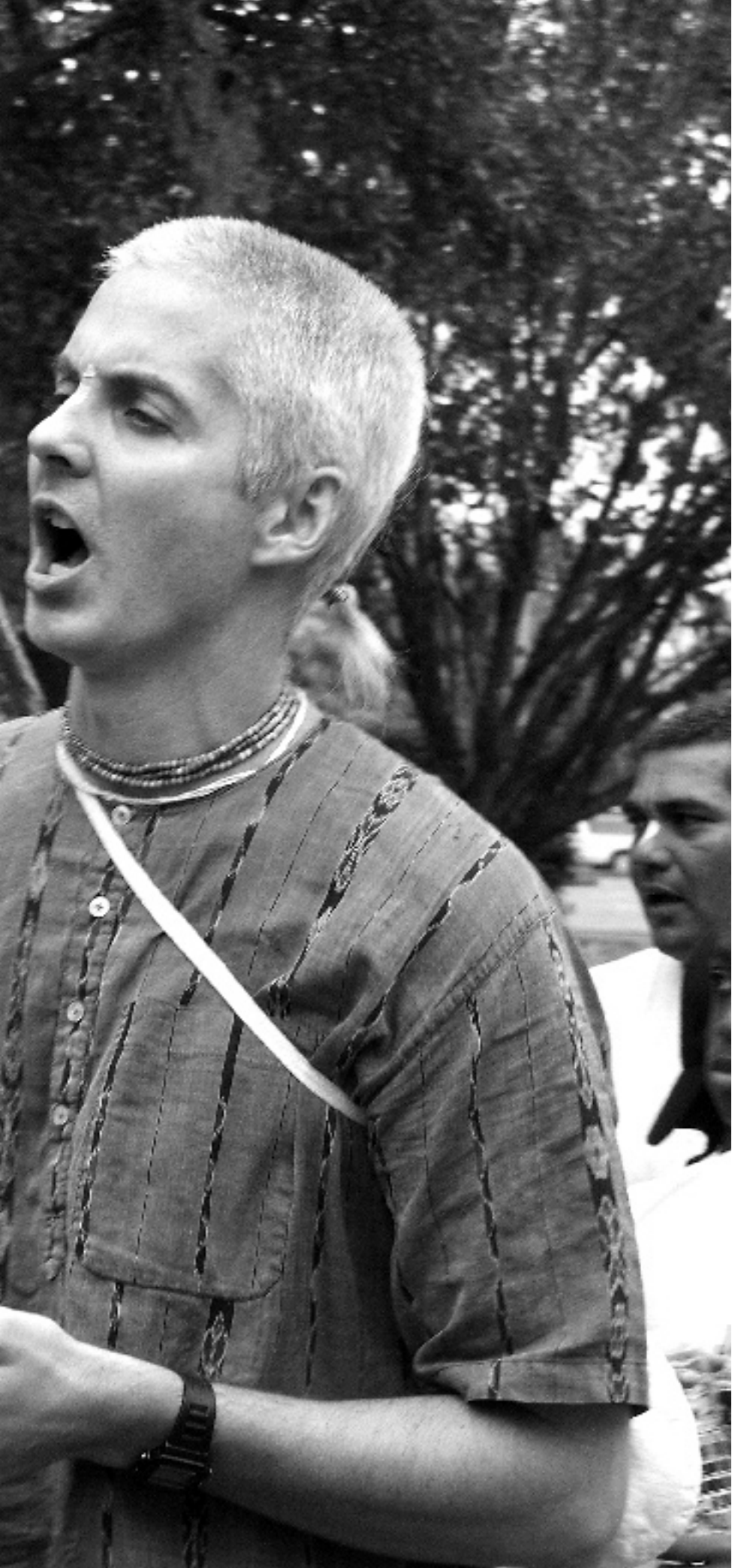
There's an example of this in the scriptures. While the sage Durvāsā was passing on the road, he saw Indra, chief celestial administrator, riding on the back of his elephant. Durvāsā was pleased to offer Indra a

garland from his own neck. But proud Indra took the garland and, without respect for Durvāsā Muni, placed it on the trunk of his elephant. Being an animal, the elephant couldn't understand the value of the garland and threw it between its legs and smashed it. Seeing this insulting behavior, Durvāsā cursed Indra to become poor. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.5.15–16, Purport)

The fact that Indra was willing to part with a gift is laudatory. Giving in charity our possessions, whether earned or bestowed, is purifying even for saints. Indra's problem was that he gave in charity to an animal. Kṛṣṇa teaches in *Bhagavad-gītā* that charity should be given to a worthy person, at an appropriate time and place, without expecting return. If charity is given to someone who will misuse it, or if it is given disrespectfully, the giver becomes involved with the illusion of ignorance instead of advancing either materially or spiritually.

The greatest treasure is the holy name of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa. It is more precious than an alchemist's touchstone, which turns iron to gold. Our having received the holy name shows the love of those who gave it to us





as well as our determination to know and love the Supreme Lord. To know of the glory, power, and love of the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is to know the essential intimate truth of all existence. Certainly when we have the fortune of the holy name we should also give it in charity.

Yet this treasure of Kṛṣṇa's name, which is identical to Kṛṣṇa, exhibits its full pleasure and peace only to one who honors it. One of the prime ways to show this honor is to use discretion when revealing the details of the name's glories. If we tell of the name's grandeur and sweetness to someone who then becomes blasphemous, we are also responsible for offending the holy name, and our spiritual advancement is impeded.

Jesus said, "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces." (Matthew 7:6) In a similar way, Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, "This confidential knowledge [of surrender to Kṛṣṇa with love] may never be explained to those who are not austere, or devoted, or engaged in devotional service, nor to one who is envious of Me." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.67)

SHARING THE NAME

Is the solution to keep spiritual knowledge to ourselves? No. For if out of fear of giving the holy name to swine-like envious people we refrain from sharing our spiritual wealth, we become envious as well. Śrīla Prabhupāda told one of his disciples, an expert cook, that to avoid envy she should teach her skills to others. An envious person wants to either take away what others have or prevent them from having access to his own opulence. Instead, we should want others to become as spiritually wealthy and fortunate as we are, or more so. In addition, by giving the charity of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to a worthy person, we evoke Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, thereby increasing our own happiness in chanting.

To share the holy name and the astonishing brilliance of Lord Kṛṣṇa's form, qualities, and activities with faithful, honest persons brings great

Faith is the only real qualification for taking up the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name.

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joy and satisfaction. The reciprocation of wisdom and elation both between the people who exchange understanding and between them and Kṛṣṇa is so thrilling as to be almost indescribable. Kṛṣṇa says, “For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.68–69)

How to discern where and with whom to share the name? The Lord Himself in His incarnation as Caitanya Mahāprabhu would chant on the public streets with His devotees, leaving it up to the hearers to take advantage or not. But He was cautious about discussing intimate details of spiritual life with those who would be critical. Before we share more than the sound of the holy name with someone, we should try to find at least a spark of faith, for faith is the only real qualification for taking up the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name.

For several years, a group of devotees of Kṛṣṇa traveled around America with two *sannyāsīs*—Viṣṇujana Swami and Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami. Viṣṇujana Swami would sweetly sing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* while devotees would give out free plates of *prasādam*. Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami told his friend Ravindra Svarūpa Dāsa that he would walk up to those who were eating and listening and ask, “Do you like the food and the music?” If they showed some enthusiasm, he would introduce them to Prabhupāda's books or discuss philosophy with them. If they had little or no attraction to the chanting or the meal, he spent no further time with them.

In other words, the faith of people will show in their eagerness. Jesus speaks again of the Lord's glory in terms of a pearl: “The kingdom

of God is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45–46) Rūpa Gosvāmī similarly explains, “Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be attained only by paying one price—that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay.” (*Padyāvalī* 14)

PROPER DISCRETION

But practicing discretion in sharing the truth is more than a blanket categorization of two kinds of people—faithful and faithless. The reality is that there are few people with whom one can share either everything or nothing. The key to avoiding the offense of teaching the faithless, while at the same time benefiting ourselves and others, is to develop fine judgment regarding appropriateness. Lord Kṛṣṇa gives four guidelines for spiritual communication: the message must be true, pleasing, backed by scriptural authority, and beneficial to both parties. For a specific message to be beneficial, one needs to determine its appropriateness. For example, many truths of spiritual life seem bitter to someone with material attachments. Transcendent realization involves not only the wonderful and exciting revelation of Kṛṣṇa's name, form, and activities, but also the fact that in our separation from Kṛṣṇa we are voluntarily in an illusion of selfish, greedy ugliness. To progress in understanding our eternal nature, we must face the unpleasant truth that trying to enjoy a temporary, miserable material body and mind is at best a great embarrassment for us, the soul.

Although an understanding of the awkward situation of a soul in the world is undoubtedly ultimately

beneficial for everyone, there should be a type of contract before such instruction is given. Otherwise, if the intended recipient becomes angry there is no benefit, and there may be harm, for him or her as well as for the giver of the message. Therefore, Prabhupāda says, “One should not speak in such a way as to agitate the minds of others. Of course, when a teacher speaks, he can speak the truth for the instruction of his students, but such a teacher should not speak to those who are not his students if he will agitate their minds.” In other words, however true our instruction, a person should formally or informally accept us in the role of teacher for it to have true benefit. Of course, being pleasing is also important. Our presentation should be civilized and polished.

The principle that our hearers must in some regard be our students before we can speak bitter truth or advanced topics holds true even when we share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with faithful people. For example, readers of this article have agreed to hear something from me. When someone gives a public lecture, the audience takes at least the temporary position of students. The same is true when people take the initiative to ask for advice: they are to some extent approaching us as an authority, giving us the right to say something that will benefit them, even if sometimes unpleasant. Without such a contract, whether formal or understood, we're not justified in communicating whatever we want in the name of truth. To do so on spiritual topics is to offend the name, and if done with a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, may be an offense to the Lord's servant as well.

In his book *Harināma Cintamāṇi*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura especially explains the offense of teaching the
(please turn to page 57)

“The Citizens Must Be God Conscious”

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and one of his disciples took place in Bhubaneswar, India, in 1977.

Disciple: Śrīla Prabhupāda, one criticism against our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is that we are following absolute authority. People are critical because we rigidly adhere to your authority and to the authority of the scriptures. They say this is not a healthy psychology.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Their criticism is a contradiction. If they say authority is not good, then why are they criticizing us? They are trying to impose their own authority on us.

Disciple [in the role of an antagonist]: I don't say you have to accept me as an authority.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then you are talking nonsense.

You are like a merchant selling his wares,

but telling the customer, “You don't

have to buy from me.” What is

the use of his selling? And

what is the use of your

instruction, if I don't

have to accept you

as an authority?

Disciple: Well, everyone has his own life to live, so each person should take the

best from

many authorities. I might accept some ideas from your philosophy and some from various other philosophies as well. I can take whatever I think is best for me.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But if you find the best of everything all in one place, then why should you run here and there?

Disciple: Well, history teaches us that whenever there is absolute authority, it isn't healthy—like Hitler's Germany, for example.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Absolute authority is bad when the authority is wrong. But

if the authority is

right, then it is

good—because

you can submit

(please turn

to page 57)





Mercy Under

*Through cooperation,
challenges to make the*

by Janānanda Dāsa



Rains Down the Long White Cloud

*devotees overcome nearly twenty years of
New Varsana temple near Auckland a reality.*



NEW ZEALAND—nuclear-free country of breathtaking beauty. A land of lakes, beaches, mountains, volcanoes, glaciers, islands, fiords, rainforests, valleys, rivers, hot pools, and natural life. But despite its material opulence, New Zealand, like all countries, lacks the most valuable commodity of all: Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

HISTORY

New Zealand is larger than the UK but peopled by only four million. Before the British decided to make it their country garden away from the smog, the islands were inhabited by the Maori, who called the place Aotearoa, “the land of the long white cloud.” The Maori history stems back perhaps more than fifty thousand years, when they are said to have migrated from the northern Himalayas region, travelling across southern China, through the Pacific, and then, around the thirteenth century A.D., to this southern land. Under the colonialists, the Maori were discouraged from practicing their own religion and culture. Many were

*Last year, devotees from
around the world gathered
for the Grand Opening of
the New Varsana temple
(left and top).*

forced to learn English and study the Bible. A warrior class, the Maori didn’t take the intrusion lightly. They fought back and fought hard, winning many a battle. And, unlike many places around the world where the colonialists took over and took everything, the Maori never lost their pride and dignity.

As time went on, other groups of immigrants from many countries arrived in New Zealand, like small waves on the sea shore. From India, early settlers were the Gujarati, who opted mainly for farming. After the Fijian coup in 1987, thousands of Indians from Fiji moved in. They were followed by Sri Lankans, South Africans, Bengalis, and more recently the academic class from Mumbai and South India. Indians now make up as much as two percent of the population.

THE BHAKTAS COME FLYING IN

Auckland, the destination for most of the immigrants, is a city built on numerous extinct volcanoes between two large estuaries. The year 1971 saw the arrival of perhaps the strangest of all the immigrants. Two Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees came flying in, to be joined shortly by others from Australia. For the first time the message of Lord Caitanya—the chanting of the

holy names—had arrived in “the land of the long white cloud.” The sight of these Kṛṣṇa devotees pounding their drums and dancing in strange outfits up and down the streets of Auckland raised many an eyebrow. But New Zealanders have remarkable tolerance, and sure enough the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement flourished and was supported by many local personalities.

In 1972 Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Auckland and installed Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa deities, whom he named Rādhā-Giridhārī (“the lifter of Govardhana Hill”). Early on, Śrīla Prabhupāda indicated that he wanted a large temple in New Zealand. In a letter to a disciple, he wrote, “Our preaching in Australia and New Zealand was very successful, and in New Zealand we shall very soon have our own temple.” On his last visit, in April 1976, Śrī-

A crane positions the frame for the temple dome (right), which was crowned with the symbol of Viṣṇu during the opening ceremonies (below).





The ceiling of the octagonal temple is of glass panels and oil paintings (above and left) by Dina Bandhu Dāsa of the Ukraine (above, left). Local and Pacific stained timber was used extensively throughout the temple.

la Prabhupāda installed the deities of Gaura-Nitāi (Caitanya and Nityānanda) and Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadra. Again the subject of a custom-built temple came up, and Śrīla Prabhupāda directed the devotees to make it in “Vṛndāvana style.”

NEW VARSANA: THE BUILDING BEGINS

As the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement spread in New Zealand, the need for a larger property became apparent. The house in the city was no longer adequate. In 1978 the devotees bought a 98-acre plot of farmland about twenty minutes’ drive from the city and named it New Varsana. (Varṣāṇā is the hill site of Rādhārāṇī’s home in Vṛndāvana). The Auckland deities were moved to a small farmhouse at the front of the property. In 1985 plans to build a large temple were drawn up under the direction of ISKCON architect Surabhi Swami. At that time ISKCON was flourishing in New Zealand

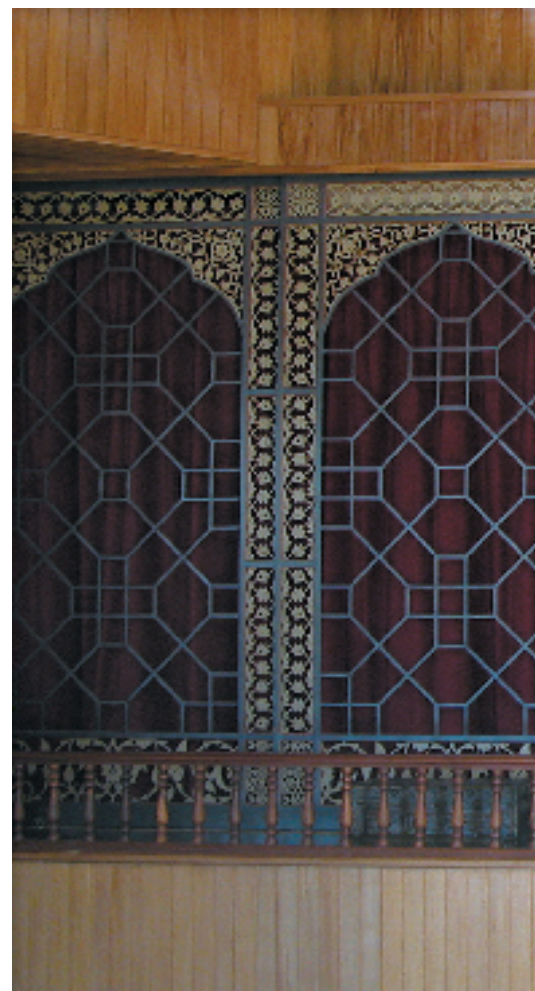


and there was no proper Hindu temple in Auckland. It seemed the ideal timing. Authorities approved the application for the building. The location on the property for the temple was ideal, overlooking the beautiful Waitemata estuary and surrounded by forests and fields. At the ground-consecration ceremony in February 1987, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Rt. Hon. David Lange, gave the key address and unveiled a commemorative plaque. The project was named Bhakti Bhavan, “Temple of Devotion.”

Work began at once with great enthusiasm. Devotees did the early construction, including setting the foundations, making columns, and laying the ground-floor slab. As New Zealand is within the volcanic belt, the infrastructure was designed to withstand the heaviest earthquakes. A unique heating system was built into the floor. The design of the temple was a blend of Vedic and Western architecture.

Fortunes changed, however, and unexpectedly, after a few years, work slowed to a standstill. ISKCON New Zealand hit hard times. Doubts crept in as devotees crept out. The growing Hindu population temporarily lost confidence. ISKCON’s project was the first of its kind in Auckland, but now several Hindu temples had started to rise. It appeared as if the devotees had missed their chance, and the question was whether to carry on or abandon ship. Perhaps it had been a mistake—maybe the location was wrong, it was too far from the main road, too big, too expensive, the materials not right. Members were divided in opinion, but despite objections and challenges, a small group of devotees, backed by ISKCON’s global governing body, the GBC, pushed forward.

The situation was an embarrassment. Much money and time had been invested with little to show of worth, and now funds were barely trickling in. At last, in 1995, devotees



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīrīdhārī (left) reign resplendent in Their new temple. Below: the main entrance viewed from inside the temple. Bottom: the elegant doors to the deity's private sanctuary.



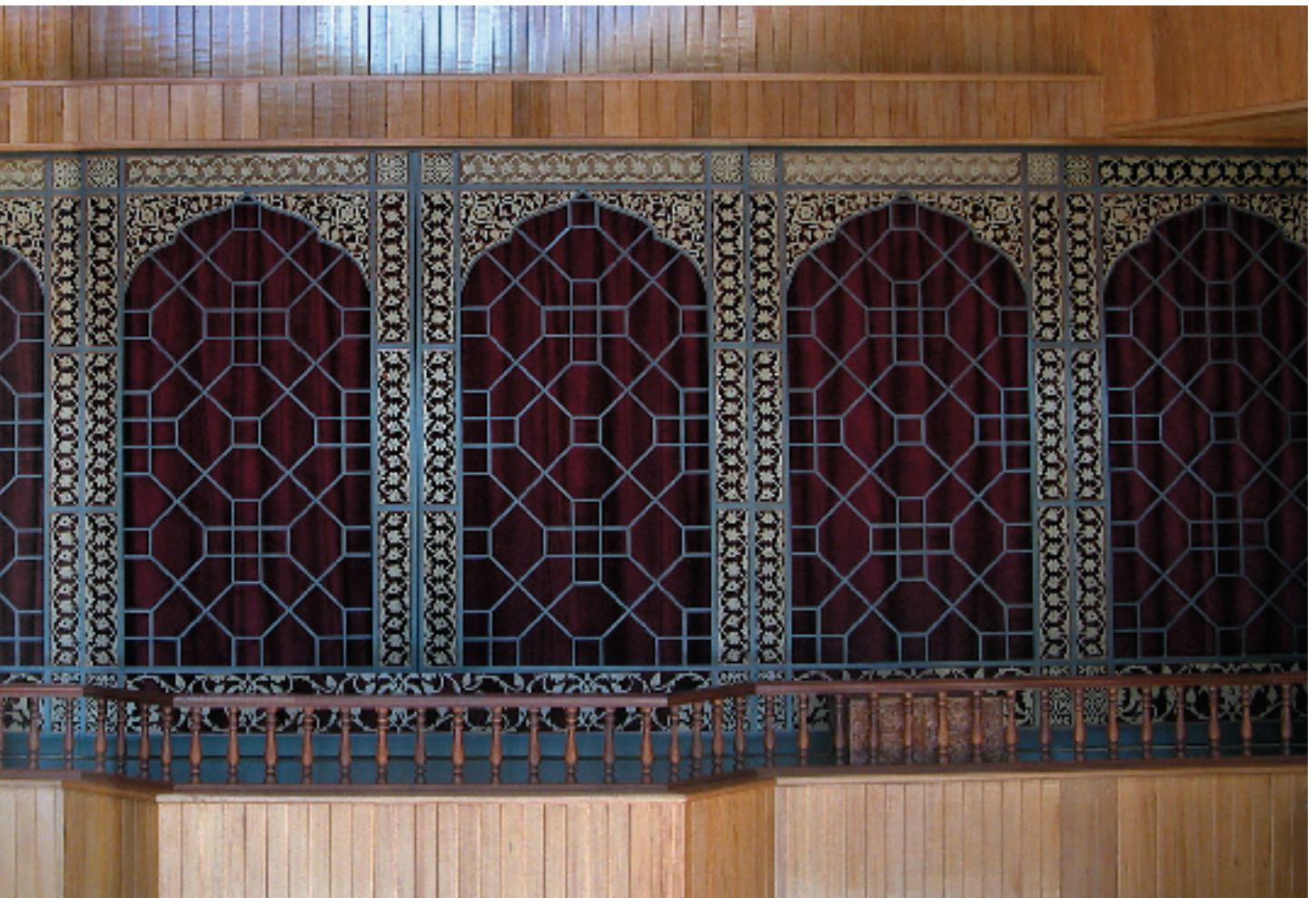
made a concerted and decisive effort to get back into gear (at least first gear) and to go forward as fast as possible. They called in contractors and drastically revised the plans. One by one the walls went up, the columns, roof, and main dome completed.

It is often said that good things take a long time—like good nuts, which take much longer to mature than inferior ones. The elusive completion date was put back again and again. The amount of money needed to finish the job never seemed to reduce, no matter how much progress was made. *Vastu* architects (concerned with mystic positioning) suggested the whole thing should be upturned and relocated. Lack of unity plagued the ranks.

COOPERATION, THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

In 2003, after years of struggle and anxiety, a major bank in Auckland agreed to give a large grant to cover one third of the remaining costs to open. A loan was procured to cover the balance.

But still it was an uphill battle. The







real turnaround took place when the last of Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions to his disciples took effect: cooperation. At the opening ceremony, Jaya Śīla Dāsa—initial project manager and fund raiser in the final stages—commented: “This is the difference we can make when we learn to cooperate. Very often ‘cooperate’ is misunderstood to mean ‘compromise’: ‘If I have to cooperate, I have to give up something. I have to compromise.’ But that is a misunder-

standing of the word *cooperate*. It means operating conjointly. We have found throughout this project that when we genuinely cooperate, amazing things can happen. Up until a few months ago, there was a huge amount to be completed in this project, and I mean a huge amount. And things were going along as they had been for many years—seventeen years. But when we had a breakthrough in our cooperation as a team, everything fell into place, and the result is



Bovine residents (above left) graze contentedly as the temple rises behind them. Jaya Tīrtha Caraṇa Dāsa (above) conducts a ceremony honoring the Lord's disc before its installation on the temple. In 1987, David Lange (far left), then Prime Minister of New Zealand, unveils the commemorative plaque at the temple's ground-consecration ceremony. A group of Auckland's Maori devotees (left center) delight the audience by performing traditional Maori songs with a Hare Kṛṣṇa flavor. At left: Reflecting the devotees' joy at the completion of the temple, Vimalā Devī Dāsī (at left in photo) and Mādri Devī Dāsī eagerly welcome the many visitors.

The Lord was definitely in control, as He always is, and devotees worked together enthusiastically as His instruments.

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this beautiful temple.”

The opening date was fixed for January 16–18, 2004. No turning back this time. The colossal task of finishing on time was daunting. Devotees worked round the clock. The electrical wiring, the granite flooring, the elaborate altar gates, the magnificent ceiling paintings, the *amlikas* (bases for the dome structures), the doors, the landscaping, the cleaning—the tasks seemed unending and next to impossible.

The countdown to opening fast approached. The excitement was reaching bursting point. Even many who had previously rejected the project came forward to help. The Lord was definitely in control, as He always is, and devotees worked together enthusiastically as His instruments.

THE WISH FULFILLED

On January 15, devotees from all over the world began to assemble for a great *yajña* (sacrifice). The beautiful deities—Rādhā-Giridhārī, Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā, and Gaura-Nitāi—were about to move to Their promised palace after twenty-five years of being worshipped in a small renovated farmhouse.

At last, after so many years of uncertainty, the temple was finally ready. The day before the move, Sudarśana (the Lord’s discus weapon) was invoked, and the *kalaśas* (pinnacles) installed and bathed atop the temple domes. Then, finally, surrounded by hundreds of devotees, many with tears in their eyes and the holy names on their tongues, the deities were carried one by one from Their altars and placed in chariots to make the one-kilometer journey down the farm road to Their new home.

In the front car, a resident devotee police officer escorted the pa-

rade in his official car with flashing red and blue lights. In the next car, a Rolls Royce, rode deities of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. The temperature was pleasant, the skies clear. In a late-model convertible rode Gaura-Nitāi, a small deity of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and two sets of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *utsava* (festival) deities for the *abhiṣeka*, or bathing ceremony, which would take place that evening. At the rear, an elaborately decorated horse-drawn coach carried Rādhā-Giridhārī.

AUSPICIOUS SIGNS

During the procession, a large black bumble bee flew onto the coach, circled the deities a few times, hovered in front of Rādhārāṇī, and settled on Giridhārī’s garland. Hari Śāuri Dāsa, a devotee present there, mentioned that when a similar thing once happened in Māyāpur, India, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that it was an extremely auspicious sign. Then, as Rādhārāṇī was leaving the coach and being carried up the steps of the new temple, another large black bumble bee landed on Her. And as the deities entered the temple, rain began to fall lightly with the sun still shining. In Sanskrit this is called *divya-snāna* (“divine bath”), and is also considered most auspicious.

After the *abhiṣeka* and placement of the deities on Their new altars, the guests were entertained in a large marquee tent set up on the lawns. Students from the community’s Hare Krishna School acted the drama of the lifting of Govardhana Hill. A Hare Kṛṣṇa Maori group was especially well received, performing traditional Maori *hakas* (songs and dances) with a Kṛṣṇa conscious flavor. Several dignitaries spoke to the audience.

Local mayor His Worship John Law said of his district council, “We like different points of view; we like different foods; we like different cultures and beliefs.” He added, “I believe frankly that if only we could be more tolerant to different ways of thinking, different ways of being, we wouldn’t have the problems we have internationally today.”

One of the remaining major difficulties for the temple was the inadequate approach road. It was just a rough gravelled track. A devotee visiting from China had sponsored the forming and widening of the road, but to complete and tar-seal it would be another huge expense. At the opening, a large appeal poster was displayed, with the hope that the visitors would be sympathetic after driving on the road. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, Jaya Śīla Dāsa announced that a guest had pledged the full NZ\$70,000 needed to complete the road, which is now named after her: Manjula Sharma Drive.

Through cooperation and determination, Prabhupāda’s desire has materialized. The devotees in New Zealand have seen first-hand what cooperation can accomplish, and they feel confident that through abiding by Prabhupāda’s wish that his followers cooperate, the mercy will continue to rain down on the land of the long white cloud. ❁

Janānanda Dāsa, from the UK, was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1972. He has served mostly in the UK, Malaysia, India, and Australasia. He was the president of ISKCON Auckland from 1995 to 1997.

ONLINE EXTRA

For more on the temple opening, visit www.krishna.com/392



Soldier for Kṛṣṇa

A Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee tries to make the best of his second tour of duty in Iraq.

by Pārthasārathi Dāsa

AS I SIT AND STARE at a dead soldier's rifle, on which hang his ID tags swaying in the wind, I can't help but think of the road I took to get where I am today. The journey I have taken over the last twenty-eight years has been a hard one. I have gone from a child grow-

ing up on the streets of Brooklyn, New York, to a soldier in the US Army, to a spiritual welfare-worker. Through all these memories, there has been good and bad, life and death. Now I'm on my second tour of duty in Baghdad, the city that assaulted my health and claimed the

lives of so many of my friends. But instead of being sad about returning to this situation, I try and put a Kṛṣṇa conscious perspective on it.

I began life in the army at the age of seventeen, not because of patriotism or for glory but for the chance to get out of Brooklyn. I worked hard

to develop all the skills and morals of someone dedicated to my country and its defense. But despite advancing rapidly, I felt something was missing.

The army has taken me to many combat zones. In June 1999, I was sent to Kosovo to support the air war. This deployment would change my life forever. I saw firsthand the horrors of war. One day on patrol we found two children who were killed when they picked up an unexploded bomb. This was a turning point in my life. It took me from a life of material goals to one of compassion and mercy.

That same day, I received in the mail a book containing an interview with a Hare Kṛṣṇa band. I found their philosophy compelling, and I decided I'd look for a temple upon redeployment from Kosovo.

As soon as I returned to Germany, my stepmother died from cancer. I was overwhelmed with grief. So on a cold winter day I began my search for the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. Eventually, just as I was about to give up hope, I found them. I quickly realized that Kṛṣṇa consciousness was right for me. I wanted to help people and could understand that giving them Kṛṣṇa was the best way to do that.

I started to go regularly to the temple in Nuremberg and sometimes went out with devotees to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. I got initiated in September 2001.

WITH MY GĪTĀ IN KUWAIT

Now fast-forward a few years. I was doing well in the army. I became a staff sergeant and was given thirty-five soldiers to care for, motivate, mentor, and develop. On Febru-



ary 1, 2003, we received orders to deploy to Kuwait in support of the possible invasion of Iraq. I couldn't believe I was going. How could Kṛṣṇa do this to me? But after talking with my spiritual master, I felt better. I realized that this was my duty. I was a soldier, and a soldier's duty is to fight.

I went to Kuwait armed with a rifle, *japa* beads, and *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. I was a soldier in Lord Caitanya's army. This was a unique situation, but I was determined to try to teach Lord Kṛṣṇa's message. Everywhere I went I chanted. I wore my body armor and my helmet, and I carried my weapon, but around my neck was my bead bag.

In Iraq, the conditions were spiritually challenging. I couldn't chant on my beads because I had to constantly grasp my weapon. I tried to engage my mind in prayer and maintained great hope that the Lord in His form of Nṛsiṃhadeva would protect me. My diet was far from ideal, and the standards of cleanliness were not that of a Vaiṣṇava. But I was following my nature and doing this duty for my country and the soldiers under my command.

I tried to maintain my Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but it was difficult. The best way for me was to chant. When we got ambushed once, I yelled, "Kṛṣṇa!" I learned how wonderful His name is. As I chanted more and

***Everywhere I went I chanted. I wore my
body armor and my helmet, and I carried my weapon,
but around my neck was my bead bag.***

• • •

more, I felt my anxiety leaving and I was able to fight. I could put my thoughts aside and just go with my gut instinct. I was hoping that Kṛṣṇa was guiding me.

After we got back to base camp, everyone asked me how I was so calm. I took the opportunity to talk to them about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. These soldiers were so eager for Kṛṣṇa. As I read from the *Bhagavad-gītā*, I saw the look in their eyes. Gone was the look of fear and death. For a minute, these soldiers forgot about the war, about the bullets flying overhead. They concentrated on the Absolute Truth.

I explained that we are all dead by Kṛṣṇa's arrangement. What was the point of worrying about this situation? At the time of death we should only think of God.

The soldiers were very thankful for this knowledge. Some asked if we could have a class every week. As I sat on my bunk and reflected on the day, I realized that in the middle of a war, Kṛṣṇa had arranged for me to teach others about Him. I saw how the spirit soul is eternally Kṛṣṇa's servant, and how for a second these soldiers had remembered their position.

From that day on, before we left for a mission we had a short class on *Bhagavad-gītā*. I would throw Ganges water on them. It was a funny scene—all these serious soldiers focused on their mission, and me running around dosing them with water. They enjoyed it.

As souls in the material world, we are subject to birth, disease, old age, and death. During the Iraq war, a few of my friends died, one in my arms. These soldiers had heard Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and the *mahā-mantra*. A

few had given me food to offer to Kṛṣṇa. They were attracted to Kṛṣṇa. The more they heard of Him, the more they engaged their lives in His service. They were devotees—according to Lord Caitanya's definition of a devotee as someone who says the name *Kṛṣṇa* once. By the Lord's mercy, they had said it during this short lifetime.

My Iraq tour ended unexpectedly. I was hurt from the blast of an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) that hit my truck. The concussion of the blast made me lose awareness of my surroundings. I looked down at my body to make sure I still had my legs. I heard my passengers screaming, so I fired my rifle to cover their movement.

My injuries weren't life-threatening, but three weeks later I was flown to Germany because blood was pooling in my lungs. I spent two weeks in the hospital. I was released on Jan-māṣṭamī, so I went to the Berlin temple. It was amazing to see the deity of Kṛṣṇa after all I had been through. The day was like a dream. I saw my guru and my godbrothers.

My consciousness was bad from the war. I was confused and thought I had committed many sins in the Middle East. After my spiritual master put my mind at ease, I started to get readjusted to normal life. I got married and started to make plans for the future. Everything was going great.

BACK TO IRAQ

Then I was notified that I would be returning to Iraq. As if things couldn't get worse—I was going to a base camp that was constantly mortared and attacked.

Now, on my second tour in Iraq, I have left behind my spiritual family and my wife. But this time, I'm here to spread Kṛṣṇa's name to this war-torn country. This time I'm more prepared. I learned so much last year. I learned that we can't always understand Kṛṣṇa. We think spiritual life is great when everything is good. But I have come to understand that we have to keep our spiritual outlook in all circumstances. I understand that my karma has put me in a situation where I can't eat properly, I have no association with devotees, and I'm being shot at.

I reflect on my short stay in Germany and appreciate Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. I'm also more dependent on Him. Iraq is one of the best situations I have ever been in. I can now use my situation to introduce people to Kṛṣṇa. It's a fact that in war, at some point every soldier turns to God for shelter. Sometimes it is a prayer of forgiveness. Some might pray for a quick death. I pray that Kṛṣṇa manifest Himself in every soldier's heart and that they realize that they should be His servants.

At the moment, there is a lot going on here. I'm speaking about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, even to high-ranking officers. The response has been terrific. Prabhupāda wanted devotees in all aspects of the government. I'm trying to do this service as an offering to Kṛṣṇa. Iraq is not a religious war. It doesn't matter to me why I'm here. I'm here to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Iraq isn't a Kṛṣṇa conscious country, but the seed of *bhakti* has been sown here. Let's pray that it takes root. Prabhupāda taught that real peace will come when every country becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious. ❀

SRILA
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ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀ

The Highest Thinker

by Lokanāth Swami

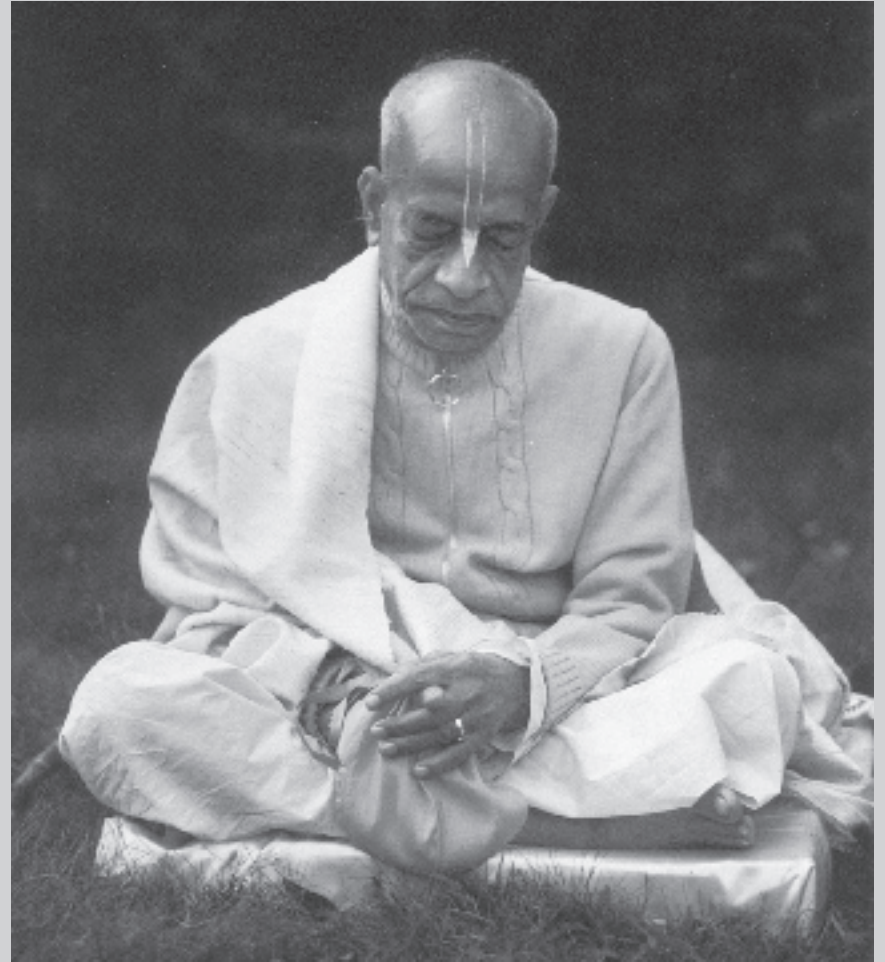
Last December I attended an event celebrating Gita Jayanti, the day Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the sublime message of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Towards the end of the evening, a gentleman asked me, “What type of a thinker is your spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda?”

My response was that he thought like God. I explained that Śrīla Prabhupāda is not God, but his thoughts are godly, fully corresponding to the thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Like father, like son.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s motto is “Simple living and high thinking.” The highest thinking is that which comes from Kṛṣṇa. God shared His thoughts with His devotee Arjuna on the Kurukshetra battlefield. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the embodiment of those instructions of *Bhagavad-gītā* given by the Lord. He dedicated his life to preserving and propagating the thoughts of God by presenting *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Eternal Thoughts

Thinkers come and go. Their thoughts and philosophies may influence the world for some time, perhaps a few hundred years, surviving in the form of opposing isms—socialism, capitalism, conservatism, liberalism. All these thoughts are products of material nature, which is full of dualities. There are good thoughts and bad thoughts, popular



thoughts and unpopular thoughts. With the influence of time, these thoughts and philosophies disappear, and others emerge to dominate the world scene. But what Kṛṣṇa spoke five thousand years ago is everlasting.

The word of God is from beyond this world. In the Fourth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells us that the knowledge He’s speaking was first revealed on earth some two million years ago and now He is repeating it to Arjuna at Kuruk-

shetra. Thus, the thought of God is ever fresh and eternally relevant. It is transcendental, above the dual nature of this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would often say, “Let Kṛṣṇa speak for Himself.” As Kṛṣṇa’s transparent representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda delivers the thoughts of God without change. He always gives credit to the Lord, never taking credit for himself. His spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, asked him to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness

MAY HIS FAME SPR

DA 108 CELEBRATION

in English. To fulfill that desire, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote books in English. As his family of disciples grew around the world, Śrīla Prabhupāda expanded his spiritual master's order by instructing his followers to print books in as many languages as possible. Today, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* appears in more than seventy-five languages, and millions of copies have been distributed around the world. Devotees make a special effort to distribute *Bhagavad-gītā* in December, the month in which the Lord delivered His teachings. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that his books—that is, books full of Kṛṣṇa's thoughts and words—would be read for the next ten thousand years.

Simply Living, No Thinking

Instead of accepting "Simple living and high thinking" as its guiding motto, the world today is pursuing a topsy-turvy course. People prefer high living and simple thinking—or simply living and no think-



ing. I often see people wearing T-shirts with the message "Just do it!" which to me means "Don't even think—just do it!" The whole world is witness to

the outcome of the philosophy of unbridled individualism. The social, environmental, and spiritual fabric of the world are being shredded. The message of Godhead is the need of the hour. It is what we must pursue. This is Śrīla Prabhupāda's message, and it is complete. Any truths presented in the

writings of other intellectuals and philosophers are included in what Prabhupāda has presented. That is because Śrīla Prabhupāda's message is Kṛṣṇa's message—the highest message.

On the occasion of His Divine

Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's 108th birth anniversary, we appeal to everyone to read and distribute his books, especially *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Śrīla Prabhupāda would say, "If you want to know me, then read my books."

INFORMATION

FEATURED 108 EVENTS

March 9–28: Māyāpur Festival 2005—A grand celebration is planned to commemorate Śrīla Prabhupāda's 108th anniversary and the 500th anniversary of Lord Caitanya's initiation.

Festival Highlights

- Largest gathering of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples since his departure
- Hours of Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kathā*
- Celebration of Śrīla Prabhupāda's 108th birth anniversary
- Celebration of 500th anniversary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's initiation by Śrīmad Īśvara Purī.
- A special festival at Kanai Natshala.
- Brahmotsava Mahā-Abhiṣeka of Śrī Pañca-tattva deities
- Free *prasādam*, no festival fee, free seminars on Śrīla Prabhupāda's pastimes

Festival Schedule

March 9–12: Śrīla Prabhupāda Grand Family Reunion
March 13: Śrī Pañca-tattva

Installation Brahmotsava

March 14–20: Navadvīpa

Maṇḍala Parikramā

March 21: Ekādaśī, Śrī Śrī

Rādhā-Mādhava Boat

Festival

March 22: Shantipur Festival

March 25: Gaura Pūrṇimā, Lord

Caitanya Abhiṣeka

March 26–28: Mahāprabhu's

initiation festival at Kanai

Natshala

(See <http://www.mayapur.info/> for details.)

PUBLICATION

108 Ways You Can Get Involved
(download from www.prabhupada108.net)

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

June 6–11: Padayātrā Week

June 12: World Holy Name Day

August 28: Kolkata Mahā-

Abhiṣeka Vyāsa Pūjā

(See www.mayapur.info/ for details.)

CONTACT

E-mail: sp108@prabhupada108.net
Website: www.prabhupada108.net

READ EVERYWHERE!





Jananivāsa Dāsa

Blood Brothers

In Siberia, Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy names help build a spiritual bond between a Gypsy leader and a traveling preacher.

by Indradyumna Swami

AFTER SPENDING three days with the one hundred devotees, including congregation members, of the Vladivostok temple, I went to Krasnoyarsk, in far eastern Siberia, for the last stop on my one-month tour. Of all the places I would visit in Russia this time, Krasnoyarsk was the city I most looked forward to.

It had been almost three years since I'd been there, and I wanted to see a Gypsy community where I had held a program during my last visit. I was curious about whether the people there had taken up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At the time, the local devotees doubted they ever would.

As we were collecting our luggage after the flight, I saw a group of devotees waiting for us outside. One man in particular caught my attention. He was dark-skinned, with black hair and a black mustache, and he wore a heavy, dark coat, typical of the Gypsies. I remembered him. It was Alexander, one of the more enthusiastic Gypsies at the program I had held.

As we left the terminal, he came forward and took my bag. We exchanged greetings, and he led us to his car.

"I will be your driver while you are in Krasnoyarsk," he said with a proud smile.

"Oh," I said, "very nice."

As we drove into the city, I asked him about the other Gypsy men who had attended the program. He paused a moment.

"Some are dead," he answered, "and most of the rest are in prison."

Jananivāsa Dāsa, a Russian disciple traveling with me, turned to me.

"Drugs and criminal activity," he said quietly.

"I'm sorry to hear that," I said.

Alexander smiled.

"But our leader is well and eager to meet you," he said. "He still has the garland you gave him three years ago."

"Oh, that's wonderful!" I said.

"Please convey my greetings to him."

"You can do that yourself tomorrow," Alexander said.

"We've arranged another program for you at the Gypsy village," said my disciple Guru Vrata Dāsa, the temple president in Krasnoyarsk. "Is that okay?"

"It's more than okay," I answered.

Indradyumna Swami and Gypsy leader Vyacheslav outside the home of Alexander (behind the children) in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia.

"It's exactly what I prayed for."

But when I thought of the doubts expressed by the local devotees after the Gypsy program last time, I wondered whether returning to their village would be worth the trouble. I turned to Alexander.

"Alexander," I said, "do you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa?"

He gave me another big smile.

"Sixteen rounds a day, Guru Mahārāja," he said.

A HOME TRANSFORMED

The next day we drove through the hills surrounding Krasnoyarsk out to the Gypsy village. I could see that it wasn't a normal Russian town.

"Guru Mahārāja," said Alexander, "welcome to my home."

"Oh?" I said. "This house is yours?"

Alexander opened the door, and immediately his family members and several other Gypsies broke into a melodious *kīrtana*, accompanied with *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas*.

I looked around. The whole house had been transformed. The walls were newly papered in a gentle off-white color, the rugs had been removed, and the wooden floors had been sanded and varnished. The room was well lit with bright chandeliers, and there were beautiful paintings of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes on the walls. I felt as if I were entering Vaiṣṇava.

slightly, I remembered them from my last visit. The others, however, were yet to be convinced that I had come to their village for a good reason.

Alexander spoke.

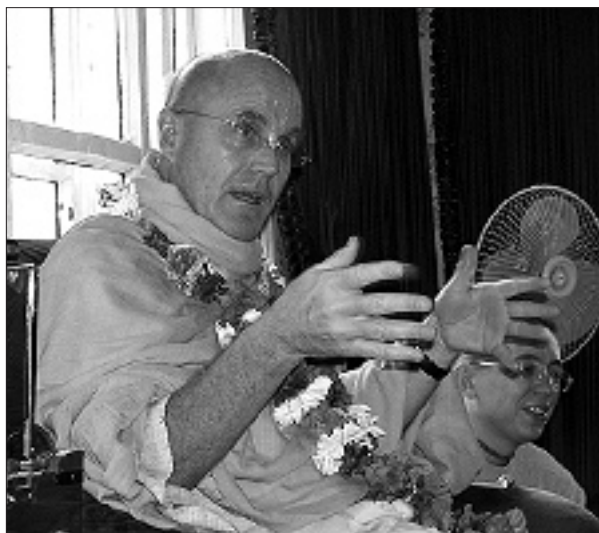
"We're very honored to have Guru Mahārāja come to our home," he said. "Although he is busy traveling all over the world, he has kindly agreed to visit our village again."

"Yes!" shouted one of the elders. "And you invited him! You're the black sheep among us!"

The atmosphere was tense. Then another elder spoke up.

"Is your message more appreciated in some places than in others?" he asked.

I wasn't sure whether his question



The dirt streets were full of holes, and most of the houses were in need of repair. Children played here and there, but when they saw our car, they scurried into their homes, much like the last time I visited. They watched us with suspicion from behind glass windows.

The program was to be at the same home as the last time. As we got out of the car, I remembered the somber atmosphere inside—dimly lit rooms, thick, dirty rugs, old paintings of Gypsy history, and the sound of Gypsy music coming from a tape recorder. I closed my eyes and chanted softly, mentally preparing myself to tolerate the darkness and ignorance.

But Lord Caitanya had a surprise waiting for me.

The crowd of enthusiastic Gypsy devotees escorted me upstairs to a room that had a beautiful altar with a framed picture of Pañca-tattva [Lord Caitanya and His four main associates]. As we entered the room, everyone dove enthusiastically to floor and offered obeisances.

"What amazing devotion!" I thought, and I bowed down slowly, all the while watching the scene unfold before me.

They led me to a big chair, sat me down, and garlanded me. Then they brought the *kīrtana* to a close.

In the excitement I hadn't noticed a group of ten or twelve older Gypsy men, obviously village elders, seated around the room, looking at me suspiciously. When two of them smiled

was sarcastic or not, but I answered him anyway.

"Generally," I said, "I find our message is more appreciated where people are in difficulty. In such conditions they are under no illusion about the temporary, miserable nature of the world and are eager to hear about God."

A one-armed man in a black jacket spoke up.

"Are you accepted everywhere you go?" he asked.

"Not always," I answered. "People are often afraid of what they don't know. Just you like you Gypsy people. You are often misunderstood as well."

That broke the ice, and they all
(please turn to page 37)

Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

LORD ŚIVA CREATES THE DEMON VĪRABHADRA

*Angered by the death of his wife, Satī, Lord Śiva
creates a powerful demon to kill Dakṣa.*

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 4

ॐध्वर्युणा हूयमाने देवा उत्पेतुरोजसा
ऋभवो नाम तपसा सोमं प्राप्ताः सहस्रशः

*adhvaryuṇā hūyamāne
devā utpetur ojasā
ṛbhavo nāma tapasā
somaṁ prāptāḥ sahasraśaḥ*

adhvaryuṇā—by the priest, Bhṛgu; *hūyamāne*—oblations being offered; *devāḥ*—demigods; *utpetuḥ*—became manifested; *ojasā*—with great strength; *ṛbhavaḥ*—the *ṛbhus*; *nāma*—named; *tapasā*—by penance; *soma*—Soma; *prāptāḥ*—having achieved; *sahasraśaḥ*—by the thousands.

When Bhṛgu Muni offered oblations in the fire, immediately many thousands of demigods named Ṛbhus became mani-

fest. All of them were powerful, having achieved strength from Soma, the moon.

PURPORT: It is stated here that many thousands of demigods named Ṛbhus became manifested because of the oblations offered in the fire and the chanting of the hymns from the *Yajur Veda*. *Brāhmaṇas* like Bhṛgu Muni were so powerful that they could create such powerful demigods simply by chanting the Vedic mantras. Vedic mantras are still available, but the chanters are not. By chanting Vedic mantras or chanting the Gāyatrī or *ṛg-mantra* one can attain the results one desires. In the present age of Kali it is recommended by Lord Caitanya that simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa one can attain all perfection.

34 तैरलातायुधैः सर्वे प्रमथाः सहगुह्यकाः
हन्यमाना दिशो भेजुरुशद्विर्ब्रह्मतेजसा

*tair alātāyudhaiḥ sarve
pramathāḥ saha-guhyakāḥ*

*hanyamānā diśo bhejur
uśadbhir brahma-tejasā*

taiḥ—by them; *alāta-āyudhaiḥ*—with weapons of firebrands; *sarve*—all; *pramathāḥ*—the ghosts; *saha-guhyakāḥ*—along with the Guhyakas; *hanyamānāḥ*—being attacked; *diśaḥ*—in different directions; *bhejuḥ*—fled; *uśadbhiḥ*—glowing; *brahma-tejasā*—by brahminical power.

When the Ṛbhu demigods attacked the ghosts and Guhyakas with half-burned fuel from the yajña fire, all these attendants of Satī fled in different directions and disappeared. This was possible simply because of brahma-tejas, brahminical power.

PURPORT: The word *brahma-tejasā*, used in this verse, is significant. In those days, *brāhmaṇas* were so powerful that simply by desiring and by chanting a Vedic mantra, they could accomplish very wonderful effects. But in the present age of degradation there are no such *brāhmaṇas*. According to the *Pāñcarātrika* system, in this age the entire population is supposed to consist of *śūdras* because the brahminical culture has been lost. ❶ But if anyone displays the signs of understanding Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he should be accepted, according to Vaiṣṇava *smṛti* regulations, as a prospective *brāhmaṇa* and should be given all facilities to achieve the highest perfection. The most magnanimous gift of Lord Caitanya's is that the highest perfection of life is available in this fallen age if one simply adopts the process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, which is able to bring about the fulfillment of all activities in self-realization.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 5

मैत्रेय उवाच

१ भवो भवान्या निधनं प्रजापते-
रसत्कृताया अवगम्य नारदात्

- (1) Who in this age should be accepted as a prospective *brāhmaṇa*?
- (2) How does the *Brahma-saṁhitā* describe the strength of Satī (Durgā)?
- (3) In using her power, under whose direction does Satī act?
- (4) Who carried the news of Satī's death to Lord Śiva?
- (5) Why did Lord Śiva want to kill Dakṣa?

स्वपार्षदसैन्यं च तदध्वरुभि-
र्विद्रावितं क्रोधमपारमादधे

maitreya uvāca
bhavo bhavānyā nidhanam prajāpater
asat-kṛtāyā avagamyā nārādāt
sva-pārṣada-sainyam ca tad-adhvararbhubhir
vidrāvitaṁ krodham apāram ādadhe

maitreya uvāca—Maitreya said; *bhavaḥ*—Lord Śiva; *bhav-ānyāḥ*—of Satī; *nidhanam*—the death; *prajāpateḥ*—because of Prajāpati Dakṣa; *asat-kṛtāyāḥ*—having been insulted; *avagamyā*—hearing about; *nārādāt*—from Nārada; *sva-pārṣada-sainyam*—the soldiers of his own associates; *ca*—and; *tad-adhvara*—(produced from) his (Dakṣa's) sacrifice; *ṛbhubhiḥ*—by the Ṛbhus; *vidrāvitaṁ*—were driven away; *krodham*—anger; *apāram*—unbounded; *ādadhe*—showed.

Maitreya said: When Lord Śiva heard from Nārada that Satī, his wife, was now dead because of Prajāpati Dakṣa's insult to her and that his soldiers had been driven away by the Ṛbhu demigods, he became greatly angry.

PURPORT: Lord Śiva understood that Satī, being the youngest daughter of Dakṣa, could present the case of Lord Śiva's purity of purpose and would thus be able to mitigate the misunderstanding between Dakṣa and himself. But such a compromise was not attained, and Satī was deliberately insulted by her father by not being received properly when she visited his house without being invited. Satī herself could have killed her father, Dakṣa, because she is the personified material energy and has immense power to kill and create within this material universe. ❷ In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* her strength is described: she is capable of creating and dissolving many universes. ❸ But although she is so powerful, she acts under the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, as His shadow. It would not have been difficult for Satī to punish her father, but she thought that since she was his daughter, it was not proper for her to kill him. Thus she decided to give up her own body, which she had obtained from his, and Dakṣa did not even check her.

❹ When Satī passed away, giving up her body, the news was conveyed by Nārada to Lord Śiva. Nārada always carries the news of such events because he knows their import. When Lord Śiva heard that his chaste wife, Satī, was dead, he naturally became exceedingly angry. He also understood that Bhṛgu Muni had created the Ṛbhu-deva demigods by uttering the mantras of the *Yajur Veda* and that these demigods had driven away all of his soldiers who were present in the arena of sacrifice. ❺ Therefore, he wanted to reply to this insult, and thus he decided to kill Dakṣa because he was the cause of the death of Satī.

क्रुद्धः सुदष्टौष्ठपुटः स धूर्जटि-
 र्जटां तडिद्वहिसटोग्रोचिषम्
 उत्कृत्य रुद्रः सहस्रोत्थितो हसन्
 गम्भीरनादो विससर्ज तां भुवि

*kruddhaḥ sudaṣṭauṣṭha-putaḥ sa dhūr-jaṭir
 jaṭām taḍid-vahni-saṭogra-rociṣam
 utkṛtya rudraḥ sahasotthito hasan
 gambhīra-nādo visasarja tām bhuvi*

kruddhaḥ—very angry; *su-daṣṭa-oṣṭha-putaḥ*—pressing his lips with his teeth; *saḥ*—he (Lord Śiva); *dhūr-jaṭiḥ*—having a cluster of hair on his head; *jaṭām*—one hair; *taḍit*—of electricity; *vahni*—of fire; *saṭā*—a flame; *ugra*—terrible; *rociṣam*—blazing; *utkṛtya*—snatching; *rudraḥ*—Lord Śiva; *sahasā*—at once; *utthitaḥ*—stood up; *hasan*—laughing; *gambhīra*—deep; *nādaḥ*—sound; *visasarja*—dashed; *tām*—that (hair); *bhuvi*—on the ground.

Thus Lord Śiva, being extremely angry, pressed his lips with his teeth and immediately snatched from his head a strand of hair which blazed like electricity or fire. ⑥ He stood up at once, laughing like a madman, and dashed the hair to the ground.

ततोऽतिकायस्तनुवा स्पृशन्दिवं
 सहस्रबाहुर्घनरुक् त्रिसूर्यदृक्
 करालदंष्ट्रो ज्वलदग्निमूर्धजः
 कपालमाली विविधोद्यतायुधः

*tato 'tikāyas tanuvā sprśan divaṁ
 sahasra-bāhur ghana-ruk tri-sūrya-dṛk
 karāla-damṣṭro jvalat-agni-mūrdhajaḥ
 kapāla-mālī vividhodyatāyudhaḥ*

tataḥ—at this time; *atikāyaḥ*—a great personality (Vīrabhadra); *tanuvā*—with his body; *sprśan*—touching; *divam*—the sky; *sahasra*—a thousand; *bāhuḥ*—arms; *ghana-ruk*—of black color; *tri-sūrya-dṛk*—as bright as three suns combined; *karāla-damṣṭraḥ*—having very fearful teeth; *jvalat-agni*—(like) burning fire; *mūrdhajaḥ*—having hair on his head; *kapāla-mālī*—garlanded with men's heads; *vividha*—various kinds; *udyata*—upraised; *āyudhaḥ*—equipped with weapons.

A fearful black demon as high as the sky and as bright as three suns combined was thereby created, his teeth very fearful and the hairs on his head like burning fire. He had thousands of arms, equipped with various weapons, and he was garlanded with the heads of men.

4 तं किं करोमीति गृणन्तमाह
 बद्धाञ्जलिं भगवान् भूतनाथः
 दक्षं सयज्ञं जहि मद्भटानां
 त्वमग्रणी रुद्र भटांशको मे

*taṁ kiṁ karomīti gṛṇantam āha
 baddhāñjalim bhagavān bhūta-nāthaḥ
 dakṣam sa-yajñam jahi mad-bhaṭānām
 tvam agrāṇī rudra bhaṭāṁśako me*

tam—to him (Vīrabhadra); *kiṁ*—what; *karomi*—shall I do; *iti*—thus; *gṛṇantam*—asking; *āha*—ordered; *baddha-ñjalim*—with folded hands; *bhagavān*—the possessor of all opulences (Lord Śiva); *bhūta-nāthaḥ*—the lord of the ghosts; *dakṣam*—Dakṣa; *sa-yajñam*—along with his sacrifice; *jahi*—kill; *mat-bhaṭānām*—of all my associates; *tvam*—you; *agrāṇī*—the chief; *rudra*—O Rudra; *bhaṭa*—O expert in battle; *āṁśakaḥ*—born of my body; *me*—my.

When that gigantic demon asked with folded hands, “What shall I do, my lord?” Lord Śiva, who is known as Bhūtanātha, directly ordered, “Because you are born from my body, you are the chief of all my associates. ⑦ Therefore, kill Dakṣa and his soldiers at the sacrifice.”

PURPORT: Here is the beginning of competition between *brahma-tejas* and *śiva-tejas*. By *brahma-tejas*, brahminical strength, Bhṛgu Muni had created the Rbhu demigods, who had driven away the soldiers of Lord Śiva stationed in the arena. When Lord Śiva heard that his soldiers had been driven away, he created the tall black demon Vīrabhadra to retaliate. There is sometimes a competition between the mode of goodness and the mode of ignorance. That is the way of material existence. Even when one is situated in the mode of goodness, there is every possibility that his position will be mixed with or attacked by the mode of passion or ignorance. That is the law of material nature. Although pure goodness, or *śuddha-sattva*, is the basic principle in the spiritual world, pure manifestation of goodness is not possible in this material world. Thus, the struggle for existence between different material qualities is always present. ⑧ This quarrel between Lord Śiva

(6) How did Lord Śiva create the demon Vīrabhadra?

(7) What did Lord Śiva order Vīrabhadra to do?

(8) The quarrel between Lord Śiva and Bhṛgu Muni is an example of what competition?

and Bhṛgu Muni, centering around Prajāpati Dakṣa, is the practical example of such competition between the different qualitative modes of material nature.

5 आज्ञप्त एवं कुपितेन मन्युना
स देवदेवं परिचक्रमे विभुम्
मेने तदात्मानमसङ्गरहसा
महीयसां तात सहः सहिष्णुम्

*ājñapta evaṁ kupitena manyunā
sa deva-devaṁ paricakrame vibhum
mene-tadātmānam asaṅga-rarīhasā
mahīyasāṁ tāta sahaḥ sahiṣṇum*

ājñaptaḥ—being ordered; *evam*—in this manner; *kupitena*—angry; *manyunā*—by Lord Śiva (who is anger personified); *sah*—he (Vīrabhadra); *deva-devam*—he who is worshiped by the demigods; *paricakrame*—circumambulated; *vibhum*—Lord Śiva; *mene*—considered; *tadā*—at that time; *ātmānam*—himself; *asaṅga-rarīhasā*—with the power of Lord Śiva that cannot be opposed; *mahīyasām*—of the most powerful; *tāta*—my dear Vidura; *sahaḥ*—strength; *sahiṣṇum*—capable of coping with.

Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, that black person was the personified anger of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and he was prepared to execute the orders of Lord Śiva. Thus, considering himself capable of coping with any power offered against him, he circumambulated Lord Śiva.

6 अन्वीयमानः स तु रुद्रपार्षदै-
भृशं नदद्विर्व्यनदत्सुभैरवम्
उद्यम्य शूलं जगदन्तकान्तकं
सम्प्राद्रवद् धोषणभूषणाङ्घ्रिः

*anvīyamānaḥ sa tu rudra-pārṣadair
bhṛśaṁ nadadbhir vyanadat subhairavam
udyamya śūlaṁ jagad-antakāntakaṁ
samprādravad ghoṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅghriḥ*

anvīyamānaḥ—being followed; *sah*—he (Vīrabhadra); *tu*—but; *rudra-pārṣadair*—by the soldiers of Lord Śiva; *bhṛśam*—tumultuously; *nadadbhir*—roaring; *vyanadat*—

sounded; *su-bhairavam*—very fearful; *udyamya*—carrying; *śūlam*—a trident; *jagat-antaka*—death; *antakam*—killing; *samprādravat*—hurried towards (the sacrifice of Dakṣa); *ghoṣaṇa*—roaring; *bhūṣaṇa-aṅghriḥ*—with bangles on his legs.

Many other soldiers of Lord Śiva followed the fierce personality in a tumultuous uproar. He carried a great trident, fearful enough to kill even death, and on his legs he wore bangles which seemed to roar.

7 अथर्त्विजो यजमानः सदस्याः
ककुभ्युदीच्यां प्रसमीक्ष्य रेणुम्
तमः किमेतत्कुत एतद्रजोऽभू-
दिति द्विजा द्विजपत्न्यश्च दध्युः

*athartvijo yajamānaḥ sadasyāḥ
kakubhy udiçyāṁ prasamīkṣya reṇum
tamaḥ kim etat kuta etad rajo 'bhūd
iti dvijā dvija-patnyāś ca dadhyuḥ*

atha—at that time; *rtvijah*—the priests; *yajamānaḥ*—the chief person performing the sacrifice (Dakṣa); *sadasyāḥ*—all the persons assembled in the sacrificial arena; *kakubhi udiçyām*—in the northern direction; *prasamīkṣya*—seeing; *reṇum*—the dust storm; *tamaḥ*—darkness; *kim*—what; *etat*—this; *kutaḥ*—from where; *etat*—this; *rajaḥ*—dust; *abhūt*—has come; *iti*—thus; *dvijāḥ*—the brāhmaṇas; *dvija-patnyāḥ*—the wives of the brāhmaṇas; *ca*—and; *dadhyuḥ*—began to speculate.

At that time, all the persons assembled in the sacrificial arena—the priests, the chief of the sacrificial performance, and the brāhmaṇas and their wives—wondered where the darkness was coming from. ⑨ Later they could understand that it was a dust storm, and all of them were full of anxiety.

8 वाता न वान्ति न हि सन्ति दस्यवः
प्राचीनबर्हिर्जीवति होग्रदण्डः
गावो न कात्यन्त इदं कुतो रजो
लोकोऽधुना किं प्रलयाय कल्पते

*vātā na vānti na hi santi dasyavaḥ
prācīna-barhīr jīvati hogra-daṇḍaḥ
gāvo na kālyanta idaṁ kuto rajo
loko 'dhunā kiṁ pralayāya kalpate*

*vātā na vānti na hi santi dasyavaḥ
prācīna-barhīr jīvati hogra-daṇḍaḥ
gāvo na kālyanta idaṁ kuto rajo
loko 'dhunā kiṁ pralayāya kalpate*

[continued in the next issue]

(9) What caused the dust storm in the sacrificial arena?

***“I am a guest in your village,” I said.
“I’d be honored to see your culture.”***

• • •

BLOOD BROTHERS

(continued from page 32)

nodded in agreement. Now we had something in common.

“How do you deal with that misunderstanding?” asked another man in a more respectful tone.

“We’re not shy about letting people know who we are,” I said. “We’re happy to share our singing, dancing, and food.”

A man with a doubtful expression spoke up.

“Would you be willing to watch our singing and dancing?” he asked. “Or is this just a Hare Kṛṣṇa program?”

All eyes were on me.

“I am a guest in your village,” I said. “I’d be honored to see your culture.”

THE LEADER ARRIVES

Suddenly there was a shout.

“Vyacheslav is here!” someone called out, and the leader of the Gypsies walked in.

Everyone immediately stood up out of respect. His status as a leader was made even more apparent by his large stature and prominent dark mustache. The atmosphere became tense again, and no one seemed to know exactly what to do.

I smiled and approached Vyacheslav with open arms. He also smiled and opened his arms. We hugged each other tightly for a long time.

Then we stood facing each other, hand in hand.

“I still have the garland you gave me three years ago,” he said.

“Yes,” I said. “I know. Your people told me.”

“It shines with the warmth of your last visit,” he said.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw surprised looks on the faces of the newly come elders.

“Come,” he said, “be seated.”

“No,” I said, “you first.”

I took him by his hand and sat him respectfully in a seat near mine.

“People don’t always show us such respect,” said one of the elders.

“That’s because you are thieves,” said Vyacheslav with a loud laugh.

Everyone burst out laughing.

“Krishna was also a thief,” I said.

The elders raised their eyebrows.

“But your stealing brings grief to others. Kṛṣṇa’s stealing butter brings happiness to His devotees, who like to see his childish pranks.”

Again there was laughter.

“Personally,” I said, “I prefer to appreciate your good qualities rather than dwell on the bad.”

Now the ice had completely melted.

“You see good qualities in us?” someone asked.

“Yes, of course,” I said. “For example, you have invited me back to your village and received me well. And like everyone in the world, in your heart of hearts, you are all devotees of God. You’ve just gone astray, that’s all.”

No one disagreed.

“Then we’ll show you our Gypsy culture,” a man said.

“Yes,” I said, “I want to see it.”

Several of the men shouted for a boy to come forward. The boy seemed to jump out of nowhere into the center of the room and began doing a Gypsy dance. He was talented, and he had everyone’s attention, including mine.

When he finished, the men told him to sing, and he began. It seemed to me that I had never heard such a sweet and lovely voice in my whole life. When he finished, I asked him to sing again. The elders looked pleased at my request, and one of them gave me a thumbs-up.

After the second song, the boy sat down near the elders, and they all patted him on the back.

Suddenly, another boy, a little younger, turned to the first boy and

spoke up.

“You sing beautifully,” he said, “but if you were to sing Hare Kṛṣṇa, it would be perfect.”

Silence. Everyone sat there, amazed.

Then the second boy closed his eyes and began singing Hare Kṛṣṇa, also with a beautiful voice. His singing filled the room, and everyone seemed touched, even the elders.

When he finished, he opened his eyes and looked at the first boy.

“You see?” he said. “Now you chant.”

The first boy hesitated.

“Chant!” said the younger one. “Follow me!”

The younger one began singing Hare Kṛṣṇa again, and soon the boy with the golden voice began singing with him.

The elders smiled at their duet.

Then the first boy turned to me.

“Will you please give me a spiritual name?” he asked.

I looked at the elders. They nodded in approval.

I thought for a moment.

“Yes,” I said, “you can be called Gandharva Dāsa, the angel with the honey-coated voice.”

Everyone applauded.

Then I took my harmonium and began chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Several devotees picked up instruments and accompanied me, and within a few moments the elders began clapping. A few of them chanted along.

Vyacheslav sat there with a big smile on his face.

After bringing the *kīrtana* to a close, I invited everyone to take *prasādam*.

“How shall we sit?” I asked our host.

“We shall all sit together in a circle,” said Alexander. “That is our custom.”

“And ours too,” I said.

(please turn to page 41)

GOD PROPOSES, MAN ACCEPTS

The Bhagavad-gītā offers a proven solution to the problem of frustrated desires.

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

MAN PROPOSES, God disposes” is a familiar wry comment. It is a saying by which we try to philosophize when factors beyond our control foil our best plans. Despite the adage, we do feel immensely frustrated when we have to watch helplessly as providence wrecks our cherished plans one after another. When we either can’t get what we want or must accept what we don’t want, we become miserable. And because such situations come quite frequently in our life, misery is our unavoidable companion.

LITTLE CONTROL MEANS NO CONTROL

Most people tackle this dilemma by trying to increase their ability to control things. They think that acquiring wealth, power, knowledge, fame, beauty, and even renunciation will help. But do these really solve the problem? They seem to give us con-

trol over our lives and surroundings, but they themselves are beyond our control. For example, a wealthy person imagines that his monetary power gives him control over his life and so wants to increase his wealth unlimitedly (*Bhagavad-gītā* 16.13–15). But he can lose the wealth through events beyond his control, such as a stock market crash. Thus wealth creates an illusion of control. It only increases anxiety by making us more dependent on things beyond our control. And money can’t bribe death, which in a moment strips us of everything (10.34). Hence the *Gītā* (2.8) asserts that material solutions offer no actual relief. Śrīla Prabhupāda succinctly states the futility of mundane attempts to control our lives: “Little control means no control.”

The *Bhagavad-gītā* offers a dramatically different remedy: God proposes, man accepts. All attempts to become happy in the material world are ultimately misdirected. They keep us out

Right: After hearing the Bhagavad-gītā, Arjuna agreed to be instrumental in fulfilling Lord Kṛṣṇa’s desire.





Painting by Yadurāṇi Devī Dāsi

of harmony with God. The perfection of our intelligence is to harmonize our will with the divine will (7.19).

All the major religions teach us to faithfully and gracefully accept reversals as the unknowable will of the Lord. The prayer of Jesus the night before he was crucified—"Let Thy will be done, not mine"—is a well-known example. In times of pain and grief, prayerful surrender to the will of the Lord can bring relief. But most people cannot muster the faith needed for offering such a bold prayer.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* holds a unique position among the world's scriptures in that it offers a solid intellectual springboard and a well-defined spiritual trajectory for this leap of faith. The philosophy of the *Gītā* is so cogent, coherent, and complete that after understanding it Arjuna accepted the Lord's desire that his relatives be killed. And he went even further. He agreed to help bring about the execution of Kṛṣṇa's desire. *Kariṣye vacanam tava*: "I will do whatever You say." (18.73)

INSIGHTS FROM THE GĪTĀ

Here's a summary of the *Gītā*'s extraordinarily empowering perspective on the reversals of life:

- We are not gross bodies or subtle minds, but are eternal souls (7.4–5). Therefore the sufferings caused by the mind, the body, and their extensions—relatives, friends, possessions, positions—no matter how devastating, do not deprive us of our essential spiritual identity and purpose in life: to revive our loving relationship with God. We have a changeless, blissful core that no reverses can take away. Knowing that is a source of tremendous solace and strength when everything around us seems to be falling apart (2.13–16).
- Kṛṣṇa is our Supreme Father (14.4). He loves all of us, even when we spurn His love or deny His existence. The practical sign of His selfless, causeless love is that He creates and maintains everything we wayward children need to enjoy material happiness. He provides all the universal necessities,

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such as heat and light (15.12–13). He keeps all our bodily functions, such as digestion, in proper order (15.14). He gives us the inspiration and intelligence to enjoy life according to our desires (15.15). Thus the Lord is our supreme well-wisher and supporter (5.29).

• The universal laws of action and reaction govern all events in the material world. Reversals come upon us not by cruel chance but by our own past misdeeds, in either this or earlier lives. To accept the law of karma is not fatalistic, creating feelings of helplessness and impotence, as some people say. Nor is it psychologically damaging, creating haunting feelings of guilt, as others allege. Rather, a mature understanding of the impartial law of karma is empowering. It confirms that we do have some control over our lives. By harmonizing with the universal laws of action, as explained in the God-given scriptures, we have the power to create a bright future for ourselves, no matter how bleak the present may seem (3.9).

• For those steadfastly devoted to the Lord, karmic laws aren't all that's involved. The Lord Himself orchestrates the events in the lives of His devotees so that they are most expeditiously elevated to the platform of unlimited, eternal, spiritual happiness (12.6–7). Indeed for the faithful the Lord transforms material adversity into spiritual prosperity. An intelligent transcendentalist is therefore able to see a painful reversal as a spiritual catharsis, as a surgery for the materially infected soul. A surgery, though painful, frees the body from dangerous infection and promotes recovery. Similarly, material adversity, though painful, frees the soul from the shackles of matter and promotes the realization of his blissful spiritual identity.

WISDOM IN ACTION

After hearing Kṛṣṇa's message, Arjuna realized that Kṛṣṇa was not urging him to fight the war for petty personal gains. Rather, Kṛṣṇa was giving him the privileged opportunity to play a crucial role in a divine plan.

He could help reestablish order and harmony in human society. He could destroy the anti-social elements who had grabbed power. Hence his fighting was necessary and beneficial service to God and to all living beings as the children of God. He realized that all the assembled warriors, including his loved ones, were eternal souls. They would continue to live after their bodily death. And by dying in the presence of the supremely pure Lord Kṛṣṇa, they would be purified of their sinful mentality and would attain spiritual freedom.

Before hearing the *Gītā*, Arjuna had felt hopeless (2.6). If he killed his relatives, he reasoned, he would be committing a heinous sin (1.36). If he chose not to fight, he would have no way to live and would be disgraced for having abandoned the battle like a coward (2.33–36). After hearing the *Gītā*, he recognized that he had no need to fear sin. Kṛṣṇa taught him that action in line with His will brings purification and elevation, not sin and suffering (18.65–66). Arjuna's fighting would benefit not only himself but the whole world, including his slain relatives.

Because Kṛṣṇa's will always triumphs, Arjuna would not die while fighting. But even if he did, he would attain the highest spiritual realm of everlasting happiness by laying down his perishable body in a holy war. Therefore after hearing the *Gītā*, Arjuna confidently picked up his famed Gāṇḍīva bow, which he had dejectedly cast aside. He emphatically declared his willingness to execute the all-beneficial will of the Lord (18.73). Thus the *Gītā* is a graphic illustration of how action in accordance with spiritual wisdom transforms a disastrous reversal into a glorious triumph.

The *Gītā*'s comprehensive philosophical explanations serve as a map for the aspiring transcendentalist on the spiritual odyssey back to harmony with the Lord (16.24). Yoga, linking one's consciousness with the Lord, is the means to return to harmony. The *Gītā* states that meditation (*dhyāna-yoga*), speculation (*jñāna-yoga*), detached action (*karma-yoga*), and devotional service (*bhakti-yoga*) are means by which a soul can advance

on the path back to harmony. Ultimate success, however, comes only by devotional service (11.54–55). Other paths are only steppingstones to the attainment of that devotion (6.47, 7.19, 3.9). The best method of devotional meditation for the current period in the cosmic cycle (Kali-yuga) is mantra meditation (10.25), especially the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—which awakens the soul to his eternal identity.

Abstaining from self-destructive activities of meat-eating, gambling, intoxication, and illicit sex accelerates the return to harmony. Bhakti-yoga progressively leads to the full blossoming of our higher nature and culminates in *prema*, selfless love for the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This love includes unconditional surrender to the will of the Lord. The resulting harmony of divine love makes life a joy at every moment even in this life. This divine love is the ultimate achievement of life. It conquers even death, for it continues eternally in the highest abode, the spiritual world, the realm of pure consciousness.

In *Gita-māhātmya*, Śrīpād Śaṅkar-

ācārya explains the unique position of the *Bhagavad-gītā* within the vast Vedic library. He compares the Vedic scriptures to a cow, Kṛṣṇa to a cowherd boy milking the cow, Arjuna to a calf, and the *Gītā* to the milk of the cow. Thus he considers the *Gītā* the essence of all the Vedic literature.

Appreciation for the *Gītā* is not limited to Vedic circles. Many Western scholars, including Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, have found the *Gītā* to be amazingly lucid and relevant. Mahatma Gandhi comments about the transforming potency of the *Gītā*'s wisdom: "When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to *Bhagavad-gītā* and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the *Gītā* will derive fresh joy and meanings from it every day."

Despite significant scholarly appreciation, the message of the *Gītā* became a beacon light guiding the lives of millions worldwide only through the tireless efforts of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the greatest exponent of Vedic wisdom in modern times. Śrīla

Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* continues to be the world's most widely read version of the *Gītā*, with millions of copies in print in dozens of languages. In his Introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Śrīla Prabhupāda succinctly states the pragmatic and profound value of its wisdom: "The purpose of the *Gītā* is to deliver mankind from the nescience of material existence. . . . If one adopts the principles enunciated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, he can make his life perfect and make a permanent solution to all the problems of life."

Let us therefore equip ourselves with the wisdom of the *Gītā* and confidently traverse the unpredictable journey of life to successfully achieve our eternal home in the kingdom of God. 🌸

Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. He holds a degree in electronics and telecommunications engineering and serves full-time at ISKCON Pune. He runs a free cyber magazine, The Spiritual Scientist, which gives a scientific presentation of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy. To receive new issues as they come out, write to iypfune@vsnl.com.

BLOOD BROTHERS

(continued from page 37)

As the *prasādam* was being served, I told the devotees not to begin eating until Vyacheslav had taken his first bite. The elders looked at me and then nodded to each other in appreciation.

And did those men eat! It seemed I had only just begun when they had already finished.

After discussing Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy with them for over an hour, I got up to go. Everyone respectfully stood up. I went into the bathroom, and after washing up I came back into the room. Vyacheslav, surrounded by the other elders, gave me a big hug. Then he grabbed my shoulders.

"We are brothers," he said.

"Blood brothers," I said.

He smiled.

"Yes," he said, "blood brothers."

Then he reached into his pocket, took out a large wad of money, and

slapped it into my hand.

"Thank you for what you have done for us," he said.

Then he turned to Alexander, the black sheep, and took both of Alexander's hands in his own, a Gypsy custom for showing one's trust in another.

"Thank you for inviting them," he said.

Then Vyacheslav and the other elders escorted me outside to my car. Just as I was about to get in, Vyacheslav asked a devotee to take a photo of us all together.

"To remember you," he said to me.

I got into the car, and we drove away.

As I turned around in my seat for a last look at my Gypsy friends, I saw Vyacheslav and the elders standing respectfully, the palms of their hands joined together.

I closed my eyes and silently prayed: "My dear Lord Caitanya, please be

kind and give these fallen souls Your mercy."

Having extended His mercy to the living entities beyond what He had ever given before, Gaura Hari, the only Lord and refuge for the wretched, called out with a prayerful plea, 'O Kṛṣṇa, O ocean of mercy, please protect these people. O my master, they are burning in the great forest fire of birth and death. O ocean of mercy, kindly bestow Your service upon them.'

—Śrīla Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya
Suśloka-Śatakam 63 🌸

His Holiness Indradyumna Swami travels around the world teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Adapted from *Diary of a Traveling Preacher*, Volume 5, Chapter 28. To receive chapters by e-mail as they come out regularly, write to indradyumna.swami@pamho.net. (Volumes 3 and 4 are available from the Krishna.com Store.)

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. Consult your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for the exact dates for your area.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Govinda

(February 25–March 25)

MARCH

1—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, then feasting. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Gour Govinda Swami, an ISKCON guru.

7—Vijayā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

9—Śrī Śiva Rātri, a day in honor of Lord Śiva.

11—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, the great devotee in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

21—Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.



Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu

22—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

25—Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise, followed by a break-fast of Ekādaśī prasādam (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow.

Month of Viṣṇu

(March 26–April 24)

APRIL

2—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

5—Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

13—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master

who appeared in the eleventh century.

18—Śrī Rāma Navamī, the appearance anniversary of Lord Rāmacandra. Fasting till sunset, followed by feasting.

20—Kāmadā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

24—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vasanta Rāsa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's springtime rāsa dance. Balarāma Rāsa Yātrā, Lord Balarāma's rāsa dance. Appearance anniversary of Hanumānjī, eternal servant of Lord Rāma. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṇḍāvana.

Month of Madhusūdana

(April 25–May 23)

MAY

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṇḍāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata*, a biography on Lord Caitanya.

4—Varūthinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

8—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of Lord Caitanya's principal associates.

11—Beginning of Candana Yātrā, the festival of anointing Lord Jagannātha with sandalwood pulp for twenty-one days.

17—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

An End to Suffering in Comfort

“Little did I know that my ugly material existence was about to change.”

by Madhumaṅgala Dāsa

BEFORE I came to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s family, I was just your average sense enjoyer, living in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. When I got my pay at the end of the week, the first thing I would do was rush home with great anxiety, get changed, and then go off to the nearest bar, where I would drink myself into oblivion. During the week, I would borrow money and do the same, the consequence being that come payday I would be morose, because I knew that on Monday I’d have to borrow money again. It was a vicious cycle. I would often have to sell some item of my personal belongings to make up for what I’d spent.

My entire miserable existence was like this. I’d have something, then I wouldn’t have it. The never-ending roller-coaster ride of suffering and “enjoying.”

Because of my gross illusion, and being the complete fool that I was, I was suffering in comfort. But in March 1997, little did I know that my ugly material existence was about to change.

I was working as a chef in an Italian restaurant after being unemployed for a very long time. But I got fired from the job because I shouted at a co-worker in the kitchen who tried to stab me with a knife. One day while visiting an old friend of mine, Bruce Every, he handed me a flyer inviting me to a Sunday Love Feast. It was an ISKCON function held at a temple of the Tamil community of Port Elizabeth. I thought that I should go and see what it was all about.

When I first entered the temple, I was amazed by the



beautiful forms of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Laddu Gopāla. The transcendental vibration of the *mahā-mantra* sounded beautiful to my ears. After the *ārati* and lecture, one of the devotees invited me to accept *prasādam*. I was totally knocked out when I saw the exotic feast before my eyes. The first bite I shall never forget.

I began regularly attending the Sunday program, chanting, and reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. But that was to soon come to an end. I found a job as a kitchen supervisor at a restaurant and stopped chanting and going to the Sunday programs. I thought, “Well, I’ve got a nice job. Besides, I have to work every Sunday.”

That same year, my father died, and although it did not have any real impact in my life (I was never close to him), I felt he had left the world in a very lonely way. He died alone in his small one-bedroom apartment of malnutrition and heart failure.

Shortly thereafter I lost my job and was unable to find a new one. Kṛṣṇa took everything away from me. I became another homeless statistic. I was out on the streets, sleeping in the park. *Māyā* began to kick me hard. When it would rain during the night, as I would run for shelter I would cry and ask God why He was punishing me. Could He not see how I was suffering?

I began to suffer from hunger, which drove me to shoplifting. I was caught one day and, because I couldn’t pay the fine, imprisoned. I was happy to at least have a roof over my head and food in my stomach every day.

(please turn to page 58)

THE ALBUM OF MY FESTIVE YEAR

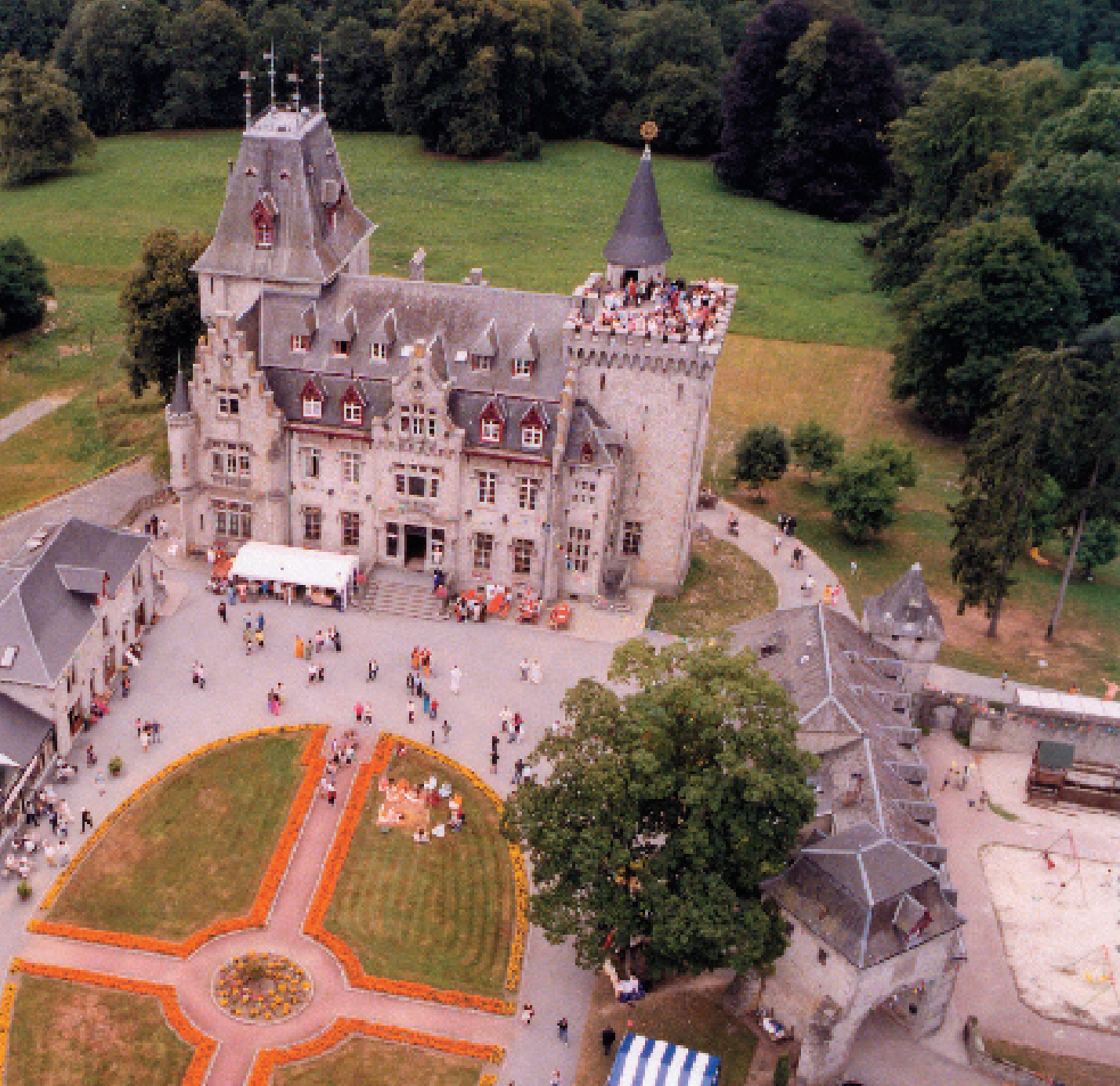
A graduate of Bhaktivedanta College in Radhadesh, Belgium, looks back fondly on her time in the ministerial program.

by Nṛtya Kiśorī Devī Dāsī

photos by Kṛṣṇa Candra Devī Dāsī



Bhaktivedanta College is located at Radhadesh (above), the Hare Kṛṣṇa community in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium. At left: students of the College's 2002–2003 ministerial program. The author is second from right, and the principal, Yadunandana Dāsa, is second from left.



SKIMMING THROUGH a photo album of my ten months at Bhaktivandana College (2002–2003), I slowed down near the end and remembered my mixed feelings on June 28, our graduation day, as we walked through a forest at Radhadesh, Belgium. We were the first graduating class. We played drums and *karatālas* and sang Kṛṣṇa's names as we walked toward a green field where we would hold our last meeting.

Our months together were the best time of my life. I felt happy, inspired, and enlightened by the experience, but I was sad it was all ending. And I had

to abruptly leave my classmates the next day to visit my family and the devotees in Israel. While sitting together, sharing thoughts, exchanging concluding words, and looking into the future, we reflected on various experiences throughout the year. Those ten months were like a long hallway, and the various courses like so many open doors on both sides.

According to our inclinations, we eventually chose different paths to pursue. Bram received initiation (as Vāsudeva Dāsa), returned home to Holland, and became the new president of the Amsterdam temple for

one year. Kṛṣṇa Candra, our youngest classmate (her parents are disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda), went to a university in Canada, where she is from. Rabin, of Indian descent and from Holland, had inspired us with his meditations on Lord Caitanya. He has now dedicated two years to serving on the College staff. After visiting Israel, I accepted an earlier invitation to join the staff of the Vaishnava Academy for Girls in Alachua, Florida. In my service here I use the knowledge, skills, and values I acquired during my studies. I often take guidance from the teacher train-

A Message from the Principal

by Yadunandana Dāsa



OUR MAIN FOCUS at Bhaktivedanta College is the character development of the students.

We see this as the primary purpose of education. Our teachers and staff offer personal attention and care to the students, to help them imbibe or deepen the Vaiṣṇava principles and values. In this way, we aim to establish a solid foundation for the future of the students, in terms of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, academic excellence, and practical or vocational skills they will use in their service to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the ISKCON community, and society.

We place strong emphasis on being loyal to Śrīla Prabhupāda and contributing to his mission. Vaiṣṇava friendship, empowerment, teamwork, and cooperation are key elements of the College's ethos.

The spiritual atmosphere of the well-established Radhadesh community is conducive to the devotional growth of the students, who come from all over the world. They actively take part in the temple programs and offer varied voluntary services in good Vaiṣṇava association.

Besides that, the academic courses are accredited by the University of Wales, Lampeter, one of the oldest universities in the UK. This ensures the quality of the courses, which prepare the students to speak and write in an informed and relevant way when communicating Śrīla Prabhupāda's message to the world.

Bhaktivedanta College offers ample opportunities for students to grow as educated devotees, to prepare for serious responsibilities in ISKCON, and to acquire the qualifications to pursue further studies and seek respectable jobs in mainstream society.

ing I received, and sometimes I refer to my textbooks. I still turn to my College friends, too, and obtain much inspiration from them.

Since we graduated from the one-year ministerial program, Bhaktivedanta College has formed a partnership with the University of Wales, Lampeter (UK). The university's Open Learning Theology and Religious Studies Program allows the College to offer its students different levels of accredited courses, each with a corresponding certificate or diploma as part of the student's development towards the award of a degree from the University of Wales, Lampeter. Bhaktivedanta College is now running its one-year program for the third time, with twelve students. In September 2005, the second

year of studies will be launched, and in 2006 the third year of accredited courses. The trustees and supporters are planning a building for the College and discussing how the College's success can be duplicated in Māyāpur and Mumbai.

HOOKED ON THE IDEA

My Bhaktivedanta College experience started in late 2001, when two trustees, Braja Bihārī Dāsa and Śaunaka Rṣi Dāsa, gave a presentation at Radhadesh about the College, which was to open the following academic year. They said that for many years systematic adult education had been the dream of some devotees. A Kṛṣṇa conscious education, they said, could include academic studies, vo-

Kumārī-priyā Devī Dāsī (below), formerly Claire, enthusiastically takes part in a class. At right, students hold an end-of-term procession around Radhadesh. At bottom, Pūrṇatattva Dāsa was one of several students attending courses open to people not in the ministerial program.



cational skills, and personal introspection and devotion. As they described the courses, my enthusiasm grew. I learned that the teachers would be senior devotees, some of whom I had always aspired to learn from, and the students would be devotees too. I thought that our quiet, rural location was highly conducive for studying. This would be a big step in my personal and spiritual development. What more could I ask for? It was what I had often dreamed of when I joined ISKCON.

At that time I was teaching at Radhadesh's children's school. After two years there, the Radhadesh temple had become my home, and its community my family. Radhadesh is in a beautiful green hilly area. The ISKCON property is well maintained,



and the project is constantly developing. Couples are raising families, and the visitors program brings in thousands of people. Since I love studying, I was attracted to staying there to study.

So I was looking forward to it all: diving into Śrīla Prabhupāda's books under the guidance of advanced devotees and learning how to apply the spiritual wisdom in my attempts to become Kṛṣṇa conscious; expanding my knowledge of other philosophies, religions, and social and ethical theories, and evaluating them in the light of spiritual knowledge; becoming equipped with the tools and methods of teaching others, inside and outside of ISKCON; deepening my faith, increasing my taste for hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, and coming closer to the desired surrender at the Lord's lotus feet.

A College trustee and the sponsor of the library, Mahāprabhu Dāsa, then gave me a full scholarship. How could I refuse? I was extremely eager to go. And I wasn't disappointed in the least. My experience exceeded my expectations.

As the time drew nearer to start the College, though, some doubts crept in: Would I, a young devotee

Grateful Students



BEING brought up with Kṛṣṇa conscious values can be a great blessing, for it instills stricter morals and

higher ideals than most people ever dream of. Applying these values is challenging, however, especially when confronting the so-called normal material life outside the home and temple. Especially during my university years, while getting a degree in biochemistry, I faced countless situations that called into question my faith in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, even though I was not always fully aware of this. So after graduating, I felt exhausted by such an intense scientific schooling.

At the suggestion of my parents, who live in Ottawa, I went to Radhadesh to take the Bhakti-śāstrī course. This was the

most valuable experience of my life. It made me confront questions I had always had about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and helped me find the answers. It made me delve deeper into Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and develop greater appreciation for the incredible mercy he gave us. My enthusiasm to read increased and increased. All this would not have been possible without the wonderful association of the other students and the teachers. Their examples inspired me to face my doubts and unwanted habits and helped me develop a desire to be humble and sincerely practice my faith. These are some of the reasons why I decided to return to Radhadesh to take the one-year Ministerial Program offered by Bhaktivedanta College.

The College is teaching devotees about the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava tradition and how to sincerely present it in systematic and infor-

mative ways to academics, other faiths, the media, and other audiences. This has always been a personal challenge for me: how to present Lord Kṛṣṇa to well-educated people in a methodical and truthful way. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the great treasure we have in Bhaktivedanta College. By deeply absorbing myself in studies and other devotional activities at Radhadesh, I feel that I am building a solid spiritual platform that I can fall back on when I return to pursuing my master's degree. I believe that everyone should set aside time to read and study Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, whether in an environment like Bhaktivedanta College, in study groups with other devotees, or at home. In this way we can all become educated and understand the deeper meaning of becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious.

—Anuradha Rao



I WAS BORN in Surinam in an Indian family. When I was eight, we moved to the Netherlands. I had a relatively happy

and peaceful life, but I never really felt at home in the materialistic culture of the West. This feeling later turned into an increasing dissatisfaction, so I started to look for spirituality.

To find the goal of life, I immersed myself in my Indian heritage of yoga and meditation. Lat-

er, I started an academic study of physics. When I realized that none of these endeavors gave me what I was looking for, I began chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, visiting ISKCON temples, and going on pilgrimage to India.

Joining a temple would have been the next step. But I wanted to be able to engage my nature, skills, and education in Kṛṣṇa's service. By this time, I had worked as a software developer for nine years. When I heard about Bhaktivedanta College, I felt that attending it would better equip me to serve Śrīla Prabhupada's mission,

especially by helping spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness more widely, beyond its current limits.

I attended the first year of the ministerial program in 2002–03. As a result, I feel that my spiritual life has deepened and I have a much broader vision of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I plan to take the second- and third-year courses as soon as they start. Right now, I am engaged in maintaining the Bhaktivedanta College Library and helping students with their research and studies.

—Rabin Bangoer

from Israel, be able to write academic and devotional essays in English? Would I be able to fit in with a group of students I mostly didn't know? This was the first year of the College, and we were the guinea pigs, so who knew what could go wrong? But soon my doubts were all dispelled.

Many senior devotees attended the opening ceremony, in early September 2002, and offered blessings and support. The College, like a newborn baby, was attended to by many well-wishers, just as parents and relatives nourish and caress an infant with love. All the assembled Vaiṣṇavas

(and even many who were not there) had already taken great care for the College's early development. After a few years of labor, so to speak, the successful birth had taken place. Finally, the College had become a reality, and very soon, with great support, it began safely and successfully tak-

ing its first steps.

During the orientation week, we received excellent training in needed skills such as note taking, speed reading, and essay writing. Sitā Rāma Dāsa and Anurādhā Dāsī (both from ISKCON Education in the UK) guided us through useful and pleasant exercises that dispelled both academic and social doubts. Although at first we students seemed like a coincidental collection of individuals, without losing that individuality we soon began to cooperate as a team. Day by day my appreciation for my classmates grew.

STUDENTS WITH PURPOSE

The oldest member of our class was Jaya Bhadrā Devī Dāsī, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. After performing devotional service for thirty



The author, above, studies in the Bhaktivedanta College library. At left, Prahlādānanda Swami, a resident of Radhadesh and a student in the Leadership and Management Course, addresses the teachers and other students.



years in various capacities with great determination, she wanted to undertake a structured study of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and develop more skills to increase her service. She took her studies seriously and shared many of her experiences with us. Now she has begun teaching Bhakti Śāstrī courses to devotees who enroll in this separate, four-month scriptural study program offered annually at Bhaktivedanta College. She has also traveled to Spain to promote Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Jaya Govinda Dāsa came to deepen his Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to increase his service for ISKCON Italy. His contributions are too numerous to mention here, but I always hope to carry with me the many edifying lessons I learned from him about Vaiṣṇava behavior.

My dear roommate (in the beautiful new Radhadesh guesthouse) was Vṛndādevī Dāsī, from Switzerland, who became like a sister to me. We

dealt with each other with great care, and our intimate sharing softened our hearts. After we graduated, she served on the College staff.

Daniel returned to England and is now a confident student of psychology at the University of Brookes, Oxford. Claire, from America, later received initiation (as Kumārī-priyā Devī Dāsi) and returned to the College to help for some time; then she enrolled at Oxford University, where her father had studied.

After orientation week, each week-long (or two-week) course led smoothly to the next. We relished each seminar as we relish delicious preparations at a meal. I felt honored to receive personal training from teachers who are not only experts in their fields (communication, interfaith, management, world religions, philosophy, and so on) but also exemplary Vaiṣṇavas and devoted followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We received an interesting overview of the six Indian philosophies from Praṇava Dāsa, a graduate student in Sweden. We were carefully given teacher training in two seminars by the teachers' teacher Rāsa-maṇḍala Dāsa, who started and runs the Vaishnava Training and Education office in England. Others, like Anuttama Dāsa (ISKCON's communications director), Kṛṣṇa Kṣetra Dāsa (who was finishing his Ph.D. at Oxford), and Śeṣa Dāsa (the minister of ISKCON education), to mention just a few, shared their knowledge with us, and also their hearts. Every time a course ended and a teacher had to leave, I lamented because I had become attached to the teacher's association. Each of them cared about us and extended themselves in many ways. Some attended our weekly student meetings and exchanged gifts with us or invited us for a pizza party at the cafeteria.

Among our teachers were two second-generation devotees who invoked our great admiration. Rād-



hikā Ramaṇa Dāsa and Kartamāsa Dāsa are both academically qualified (in Sanskrit and sociology, respectively), but they are even more exalted because of their personal warmth and Vaiṣṇava qualities.

A special blessing came upon us twice in the form of Śaṁinandana Swami, with his two courses on the holy name and the processes of devotional surrender.

Essay writing, though at times challenging, became almost one of my hobbies, and it was nice to have the tutorial help we received in polishing our papers, offered by Tattva-vit Dāsa, whose main service within ISKCON has been editing.

Yadunandana Dāsa was our teacher in residence and the college principal. In his unfailing, devoted support on all levels, he was our primary guide and shelter. His course on the first two cantos of the *Bhāgavatam* ran throughout the year.

During the year we also took part in temple activities. Some of us served Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopinātha by cooking or making garlands, some of us by cooking for the devotees. Some delivered classes in the temple, some spoke at various programs, and some organized cultural events or dramas for the Radhadesh community. We actively took part in the temple's morning programs. The College wonderfully integrated with the community, thanks to everyone involved.

The festival-like year passed with great delight. My colleagues were like my family, our classes and student meetings my very means of nourishment. I gained great hope and confidence for my future practice of devotional service.

TAKING IT WITH US

And so it was that the end of our school year was a time of great lamentation. But we had all learned to increase and improve our service, and it was now time to turn theory into practice. I was sad to leave, sad it was over, but happy to have gone through it and ready to move on and use it before I would lose it.

Lord Caitanya instructed us to tell everyone we meet about Kṛṣṇa, wherever we go. So I am spreading the word about the College. What is our impetus for sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, if not our great love for it? Is it not our happiness and the recognition of the valuable gift of mercy that we have received? And is it not deep feelings of gratitude to those who kindly offered this gift to us? For these reasons I have written about my experiences at Bhaktivedanta College.

And, no, my album is not yet closed. I leave it open. My affiliation with Bhaktivedanta College is still not over. You may meet me there sometime. 🌸

From the Cradle to the Pyre: ISKCON's Educational Strategy

by Śaunaka R̥ṣi Dāsa, Executive Board Member, ISKCON's Ministry of Educational Development

IN 1996, ISKCON members convened an international conference in Germany to examine the direction of ISKCON education. From this meeting ISKCON's Ministry of Educational Development (MED) was formed. We felt that the Society's formal educational structure—then almost entirely at the primary school level—was approaching education from the wrong end. ISKCON needed to plan from the top down, to develop a community of teachers first. And not just teachers for children, but for all levels of education, for the Society's members from the cradle to the pyre.

We began by encouraging talented people to start or build up educational programs and institutions, drawing on their own expertise and abilities. These devotees were given opportunities to flourish. A number of them put together the necessary sites, staffs, and resources to launch or expand educational projects, creating places for education-minded people to share

their experience with students and one another (e.g., the Vrindavana and Mayapur Institutes for Higher Education; the Vaisnava Academy for Girls, in Florida; and ISKCON Educational Services, in the UK). MED emphasized the need to develop societies of scholars and teachers—forums for interchanges of thought and experience—so that they can be most productive and thus benefit all levels of educational need in ISKCON communities.

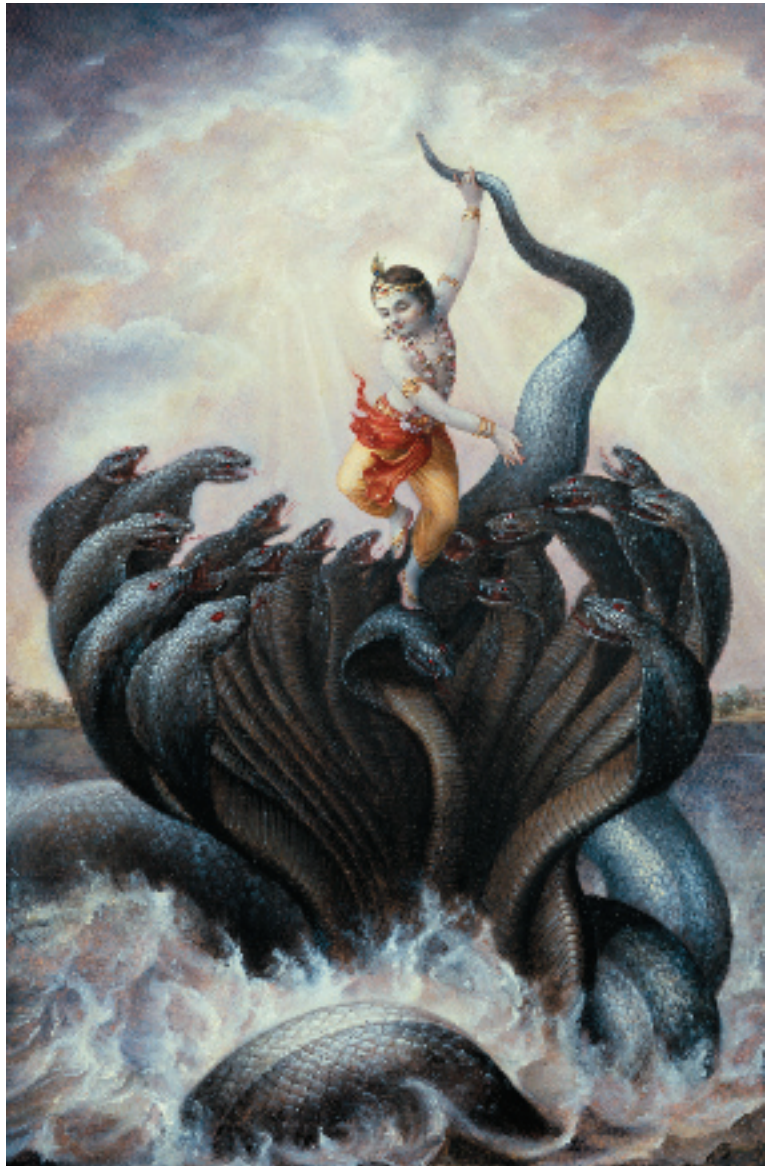
The notable successes are beginning to feed into one another. MED has built on the success of curriculum-writing programs that the Vaiṣṇava Training and Education team began developing in the early nineties. A synthesis is growing between the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) and Bhaktivedanta College in Radhadesh, Belgium. The OCHS, working closely with Oxford University, helps ISKCON students achieve Oxford degrees to the Ph.D. level. The Bhaktive-

danta Book Trust has contributed to the growth of this community of Vaiṣṇava scholars by providing student lodging in Oxford. Bhaktivedanta College, ISKCON's first seminary college, exists to produce a class of priests, scholars, counselors, ministers, preachers, and teachers. It trains them to a high level of understanding in various academic fields, including Eastern and Western philosophy; it teaches vocational skills such as teaching, counseling, communication, and leadership; and it provides a constant focus on introspective life. The OCHS is a source of teachers for Bhaktivedanta College, and the College is gradually becoming a source of students for Oxford. MED plans to develop Bhaktivedanta Colleges on different continents over the next ten years, starting in India and the USA.

To learn more ISKCON education, or to get involved, contact Braja Bihārī Dāsa at braja.bihari.bjd@pamho.net.



The ministerial program included field trips, such as one to a Buddhist monastery (opposite page). At left, Rabin Bangoer (see sidebar on page 48) receives his diploma during a ceremony in the temple.



The Novel Quality of th

*Vyāsadeva
employed elements
of the novel form to
create a masterpiece
that discusses the
highest truths.*

by Satyarāja Dāsa

AS A PROFESSIONAL writer for more than twenty years, I decided it's time to really learn my craft, and so I enrolled in a series of writing courses at the New School for Social Research in New York City. In one course, we learned techniques for writing novels. First of all, we learned that novels, as opposed to other forms of literature, are relatively long pieces of fictional prose narrative, generally constructed with

a complex plot or pattern of events, about human beings, their feelings, thoughts, actions, and so on.

I was intrigued by one particular approach to novel writing: Many successful novels, the teacher said, begin with the end and end with the beginning. In other words, we are introduced to the story by seeing how things wind up, or nearly wind up. Then we are brought back in time to see how the protagonist comes to



Above: Ultimately, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the story of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

e Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

that particular ending. After this, we understand how things happened, and then we are brought up to date with the “final conclusion.”

It occurred to me that this is basically the approach Vyāsadeva embraced in his compilation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Of course, the *Bhāgavatam* is certainly not a novel, or a work of fiction. Rather, it is a vast, encyclopedic work of over 18,000 Sanskrit verses that surveys a broad

spectrum of factual knowledge, including history, psychology, politics, cosmology, metaphysics, and theology. The nineteenth-century American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson once exalted the *Bhāgavatam* as a book to be read “on one’s knees.”

The very title tells us that the book is “The Beautiful Story of the Personality of Godhead.” One of its verses says that the *Bhāgavatam* deals

with ten main subjects: (1) primary creation, wherein the Lord creates the subtle elements, or basic ingredients, of the material world; (2) secondary creation, where Brahma, the first created being, uses these ingredients for creating the material universes; (3) the way in which the Lord maintains the universe by using His multifarious potencies; (4) the intricacies of relationship, particularly between God and His devotees; (5)

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The Bhāgavatam distinguishes itself as a spiritual work that accepts no compromise.

• • •

descriptions of the conditioned souls' impulses for enjoying the material world; (6) duties for living beings at various stages of existence; (7) detailed information about the Personality of Godhead and His incarnations; (8) the winding up of all of God's energies, along with descriptions of universal annihilation; (9) various kinds of liberation and how to attain them; and (10) the ultimate end of knowledge, including a detailed description of the life and teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In its own pages (1.1.2), the *Bhāgavatam* distinguishes itself as a spiritual work that accepts no compromise, totally rejecting the usual goals of fruitive intentions, economic development, ordinary religiosity, and even liberation. This is a book that focuses on love of God.

The *Bhāgavatam*, then, contains deep theological subjects, hardly the stuff of novels. In fact, if it can be called "novel" in any sense of the word, it would be that it is "unique" among all religious scriptures, getting right to the essence of spiritual life.

That being said, Vyāsa is known as the "literary incarnation of God," and, as such, He is adept at conveying Vedic truths in written form. It is no wonder, therefore, that He begins His *Bhāgavatam* like an expert novelist, telling us about the cursing and eventual death of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, one of the last of the great Vedic kings, before telling us, in the third book, how the world was created and, gradually, how the world's entire early history, with legions of dynasties and wizened sages, led up to Parīkṣit's fateful curse. In other words, the *Bhāgavatam* is like a novel in its essential literary structure, but not in terms of the specific narrative it brings to light.

Why would Vyāsa use a novel's format to describe literal history?

He uses it because it's effective—it grips readers and allows them to become absorbed with greater attention. By hearing first about a penultimate event, such as the cursing of Parīkṣit and his philosophical questions about the purpose of life, the reader perks up, anxious to discover what comes next and what came before. A similar device is used in the first verse of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, when blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra asks the virtuous narrator Sañjaya, "What did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do, being desirous to fight?" After intriguing the reader in this way, the *Gītā* soon moves to the enticing dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.

THE STRUCTURE OF ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

At first blush, the *Bhāgavatam* can be somewhat intimidating, not just because of its formidable size but because it can appear somewhat chaotic. Innumerable names, places, events, and deep discussions are expressed in a difficult-to-comprehend manner. Why difficult to comprehend? First of all, though it deals with history, it is not chronological, as mentioned above. It skips around in time, according to thematic preference and subjects that interrelate in various ways. Moreover, its teachings are couched in a tapestry of complex conversations between any number of teachers and disciples, so much so that in due course the casual reader may well forget just who is talking to whom.

Nonetheless, perseverant readers will notice that the external confusion matters little when trying to understand the *Bhāgavatam*'s essential message. Readers of Śrīla Prabhupāda's authorized translation and commentary quickly find that the substance of the teachings far outweighs the importance of just who speaks them.

There is, ultimately, a systematic structure to the *Bhāgavatam*. The overall narration involves Sūta Gosvāmī, a renowned sage who was requested by Śaunaka Ṛṣi, leader of a group of ten thousand mendicants, to speak on spiritual topics, particularly on the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person. Readers of the *Bhāgavatam* quickly come to understand that Sūta was in a unique position to do so, as he was in attendance at an earlier recitation when Śukadeva Gosvāmī, son of Vyāsa (compiler of the *Vedas*, and of the *Bhāgavatam* as well), had similarly spoken to a group of sages. And here we are introduced to the story of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who, cursed to die within seven days, retired to the banks of the Ganges at Hastināpura (now Delhi) to perform religious austerities to prepare for death. The resounding question "What is the duty of a person about to die?" permeates this early section of the work. Meanwhile, a large gathering of holy men surround Parīkṣit by the Ganges, as Śukadeva, chief among them, sits down to answer this and other penetrating questions.

Essentially, then, the reader is given access to Sūta's retelling of the conversation between Mahārāja Parīkṣit and Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Sometimes, however, this dialogue is interrupted with Sūta's own answers to questions posed by Śaunaka. In other words, two conversations occur at once. Furthermore, Śukadeva, in making his point, sometimes relates conversations between other masters and disciples, such as those of Brahmā and Nārada, or of Maitreya and Vidura. So the reader must at times wade through three simultaneous dialogues.

But it is well worth the endeavor. Those who swim through the *Bhāgavatam*'s difficult waters quickly realize that this scripture, unlike any other, gives more details about God and His kingdom than the average mind



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- September 3–4:** Seattle Rathayātrā
- September 10:** Portland Rathayātrā
- September 17–18:** Chicago or Jersey City, N.J., Rathayātrā
- September 24–25:** Chicago or Jersey City, N.J., Rathayātrā
- October 15:** Washington D.C., Śrī Rāmacandra Vijaya Festival



IMPORTANT NOTE: Most of these dates are not yet confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to verify the festival date with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held. Or email Festival Of India: madhuha@festivalofindia.org.

can accommodate. So wide-ranging are its topics and so expansive are its spiritual perceptions, that a thorough analysis would require a full volume on its own. One point to consider: Mahārāja Parīkṣit is not an ordinary spiritual seeker; he is the grandson of Arjuna, hero of *Bhagavad-gītā*. When attacked within his mother's womb, Parīkṣit was protected by Kṛṣṇa—so important was this sage-king for the future recitation of the *Bhāgavatam*, which in turn is so important for the spiritual emancipation of mankind.

A TIMELESS STORY

Using the story of Parīkṣit as its central prop, the *Bhāgavatam* begins like many modern-day novels. With Parīkṣit's death, a cosmic transformation is at hand: Kali-yuga is established, and depravity becomes a way of life. But before this is revealed to us, the *Bhāgavatam* takes us back—not just to the beginning of Parīkṣit's reign, but to the beginning of time, elaborately describing creation and the dawn of human civilization. Then, gradually, the *Bhāgavatam* winds its way through history, describing diverse dynasties and the incarnations of God who graced their genealogies. The journey takes us to the tenth book of the *Bhāgavatam*, its real crowning jewel: the life of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. Finally, we end up at the Kurukṣetra war—with discussions of the heroic Pāṇḍavas and their relationship with Kṛṣṇa—and the events that led up to Mahārāja Parīkṣit's curse and his resolve to sit down and fast until death, while hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The circular structure of the *Bhāgavatam* resembles the cyclical nature of time and creation conveyed in the *Bhāgavatam's* pages. This is a story that goes on forever, eternally repeating itself, thus hinting at its universal, transcendent, and timeless nature. 🌀

Satyarāja Dāsa is a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a regular contributor to BTG. He has written over twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He lives with his wife and daughter near New York City.

GIVING THE HOLY NAME

(continued from page 14)

holy name to the faithless in regard to those who act as gurus. Whether initiating disciples into the chanting, or having a formal relationship as an instructing spiritual master, there is sometimes a temptation to accept disciples for personal wealth or prestige. Such a problem occurs in ordinary schools. Universities sometimes admit students not solely because of their academic qualifications, but because they come from families that will give generously of their money, name, or both. It's no secret that the most selective universities give preference to such "legacy students." They openly say that favoring the legacy candidate saves other students' tuition costs because of the donations received.

Perhaps such a policy makes financial and practical sense to a school of engineering or law, but it runs counter to Kṛṣṇa's desire and the whole mood of devotional service to Him. A guru can suffer if he considers a disciple's qualification in terms other than faith.

Sometimes, of course, we imperfect beings may be deceived by the apparent sincerity of someone who shows interest in Kṛṣṇa's service. A merciful devotee of Kṛṣṇa wants to give a chance to everyone, fanning even a small spark of curiosity into a blaze of loving devotion. If by accident we take as a student or disciple someone who later becomes blasphemous, we should publicly renounce that person so that both of us do not fall from the Lord's shelter.

If we wish our chanting of Hare

Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare to have the full effect, we must treat the holy name and all transcendent knowledge and practice with love and care. We honor the Absolute Truth through scrupulously giving the blasphemous little opportunity to find fault, teaching only what will benefit faithful persons who agree to hear from us, and finding great satisfaction and bliss always sharing the holy name with those eager to enter its mysteries. ❁

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī and her family run a school in North Carolina. She is a frequent contributor to BTG and the major author and compiler of Vai-kunṭha Children, a guide to Kṛṣṇa conscious education for children.

GOD CONSCIOUS

(continued from page 15)

to one authority and receive all knowledge. It's like going to a supermarket; we can get everything there in one place.

Disciple: But people often confuse our allegiance to scriptural authority with totalitarianism. One professor told me that if the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement ever became powerful, we would probably be intolerant towards all other religions.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That means he does not understand us.

Disciple: Suppose someone didn't want to be a devotee in a society with a Kṛṣṇa conscious king or president. What would happen to him?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The king must chastise him—he has that power. For example, if a child says, "Father, I don't believe in education; let me play," the father will never allow it. The king's duty is to guide the citizens like that.

Disciple: But if someone wanted to be a Christian in a society governed by a Kṛṣṇa conscious leader, would that person be chastised?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The father does not chastise always, but only when his son does something wrong. To practice the Christian religion means to believe in God and abide by His or-

ders. A faithful Christian would not be persecuted in a society with Kṛṣṇa conscious leadership.

Disciple: So the Christians would be allowed to follow the Bible?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. To follow the Bible is certainly religion. But the Christians today do not follow their scripture. The Bible says, "Thou shall not kill," but they are killing millions of cows and eating their flesh. What kind of Christianity is that?

Disciple: So they should be chastised.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, they should be punished. That is the duty of the king. You may follow any bona fide religion and receive all protection by the Kṛṣṇa conscious government. But if you don't follow your own religion faithfully, then you must be corrected. That is the king's duty. A king cannot dictate that you must follow one particular religious faith, but he can order that you follow some religion. If you have no religion, then you're an animal, and you must be chastised. Religion means the instruction given by God (*dharmaṁ tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam*). And to be religious means to obey God and to love Him. So it doesn't matter through what religious process you have understood God. The important thing is that you love God

and abide by His orders. Then you are religious. But if you do not know God—or if you have some imaginary god—then you must learn who God actually is. And if you refuse to learn, then you must be punished.

Disciple: If someone says, "I know God," what is the test to see if he really does?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The test is that he must be able to explain about God to others. Ask him, "Can you say what God is?"

Disciple: "God is the force moving the universe."

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So that means you do not know God. Who is behind the force? Whenever there is force, there must be a person who is forceful—who is forcing. Who is that?

Disciple: I don't have such vision.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Then learn about God from me. And if you refuse, then you must be punished. You see, the king has to see that the citizens are God conscious. That is his duty.

Disciple: Then a Kṛṣṇa conscious leader has to be like a father.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. That quality was personally exhibited by Lord Rāmacandra. He treated His subjects like His own sons, and they treated Lord Rāma as their father. The relationship between the king and the citizens should be like that

between a father and his sons.

Disciple: The chastisement that the king gives . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is out of love, not enviousness. Chastisement means correction. If a citizen is acting wrong,

he has to be corrected. This is actually Kṛṣṇa's business in human society: to chastise the miscreants, to give protection to the godly persons, and to establish the true principles of religion. This is the mission of the Su-

preme Personality of Godhead in the world, and we have to execute His mission. Gradually Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees have to take the posts of leadership and correct the whole human society. ❁

AN END TO SUFFERING

(continued from page 43)

After my release, a devotee, Bhakta Neville, saw me and said that he had not seen me coming to the programs at the temple. I was a bit embarrassed and gave some excuse. He invited me to visit him in his flat, and two days later, Pradyumna Dāsa, the local temple president, invited me to his flat for *prasādam*. I accepted his invitation right away, on the following two nights, and then he invited me to help cook for Food for Life. I was happy to do so, and shortly thereafter I moved into the temple as a full-time devotee.

That was in March 1997. Now, by the mercy of my spiritual master and Śrīla Prabhupāda, and by the mercy of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees, I am a member of Śrīla Prabhupāda's glorious family, a family that shares and cares. I no longer have to suffer in comfort. I am blissfully engaged in distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and tell-

ing others about the glories of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda for allowing me to share the mercy and good fortune he has kindly bestowed upon me. Now I can give it to other souls, so that they may claim their rightful inheritance from Kṛṣṇa, their father.

ANDRE'S LETTER

As I look back now, I see how Kṛṣṇa made so many arrangements in my life and forced me to surrender by taking everything away from me. I am indeed a most fortunate soul. Kṛṣṇa has made me His prisoner. I have nowhere else to escape to except the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his ISKCON movement.

Soon after I became a devotee, I read the book *Destination South Africa*, the history of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in South Africa. I realized that I had become a member of Śrī-

la Prabhupāda's family in an indirect way. The book mentioned Andre de Wet, who in the earlier '70s had written to the devotees in London requesting Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and the famous Hare Kṛṣṇa record. At that time, Śrīla Prabhupāda was planning to come to South Africa for the first time. He had heard about Andre and wrote a letter asking him to assist in his visit to South Africa. Andre had never met Śrīla Prabhupāda, but prior to Prabhupāda's coming to South Africa, Andre had allowed the devotees to use his hippy commune house on Waterkant Street, Cape Town, as a temporary temple (it could be considered the first Hare Kṛṣṇa center in South Africa).

Before I became a devotee, I had been a close friend of Andre's. He introduced me to Eastern philosophy. He and I would often have endless discussions about Hinduism and reincarnation. I feel now that Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy came to me via his letter to Andre de Wet. ❁

LETTERS

(continued from page 5)

other devotees because that reinforces our inclinations toward Kṛṣṇa. We try not to spend too much time with people who teach by their example that Kṛṣṇa's teachings need not be followed, for that can subtly weaken our faith in devotional service.

You can give such people *prasādam*, and books if they are philosophical or inquisitive, and you can invite them to devotional gatherings. You can be sympathetic to them, but you should be careful about associating closely with them. If you do get together with them, monitor your consciousness to make sure it doesn't become degraded. You should know that Lord Caitanya advises strongly against such association because the potential for

degradation is so great. Try to at least appreciate this point.

Dealing with Anger

Can you please advise me on the best way to deal with anger when someone has done something to you?

Daksha

Via the Internet

OUR REPLY: The bad effects of anger can be eliminated if one is fully engaged in the devotional service of the Lord. A devotee considers that if someone harms him then he must have harmed the other person in a previous life. He also knows that Kṛṣṇa reduces the karma of His devotees, so the devotee can remain peaceful, understanding, "Everything is all

right. Actually I'm suffering less than I deserve."

The more we are absorbed in devotional service to the Lord, the less we are affected by anger. So if you do not have a program of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on beads, begin one today and witness the freedom from anger yourself. ❁

Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, FL 32616, USA. Email: editors@krishna.com.

Replies to the letters were written by Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa.

CORRECTION

The devotee in the photo on page 52 of the last issue was misidentified. His name is Yajña Puruṣa Dāsa. We apologize for the error.

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Responding to Tsunami Trauma

“WHAT WAS MY SIN?” wailed a Sri Lankan woman, arms raised to heaven, as she wandered through her village, dazed and shattered by the sudden loss of her son. “What was my sin?”

Reeling from the shock of cataclysmic tidal waves that suddenly devoured impossible numbers of humanity, many people of faith question the motives of a God who deals out death so massively to the apparently innocent. The pain of those who lost loved ones and the pain of those who suffer for unknown human brethren seem to render philosophical justifications of God’s killing inappropriate, as if adding insult to injury. Talk of karma, cosmic justice, or God’s hidden ways may offend more than comfort, outrage more than heal. So what does a devotee of Kṛṣṇa say at a time like this?

First, let us keep in mind that trauma, grief, and healing all come in stages. When people experience terrible pain, physical or emotional, their entire being cries out for relief. Extreme pain is traumatic. It produces trauma. A trauma is “an extremely distressing experience that causes severe emotional shock and may have long-lasting psychological effects.” The recent natural disaster in South and Southeast Asia produced trauma on a fantastic, almost incomprehensible scale. Thus our response, as dedicated servants of Kṛṣṇa and of all Kṛṣṇa’s creatures, must be unfailingly sensitive to the various stages of grieving and trauma recovery. As timing is essential to successful narra-



tive or drama, so in the often ghastly drama of life, the devotional healer must practice his or her art with precious timing so that deep philosophy enters the stage to good effect, and not to bad. After all, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that austerity of speech is to indeed

speak truth, but a truth that is beneficial and satisfying.

Yet sooner or later one must speak the truth. The sincere devotee must comfort, but enlighten as well. The best understanding of God and His work may not always penetrate, nor proceed from, the shattered cognition of awful trauma. Yet some day, when awful pain, like the murderous waters, subsides and calms, the truth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness must be learned. It is not an ugly truth that mercilessly condemns the victim for his or her suffering. Rather it is a hopeful message, that beneath the shell of our suffering bodies, we are all divine and eternal, that for everyone of us, our worst troubles will one day pale beside the happiness of our sure redemption by Kṛṣṇa, and that true empowerment requires that we take responsibility not only for our joy but for our grief as well.

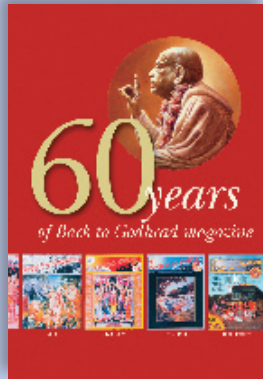
Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a supreme wisdom that must be administered by the gentle, firm, loving hands of the Lord’s servant who has deeply grasped Kṛṣṇa consciousness both as a spiritual science, and as a human art.

—Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

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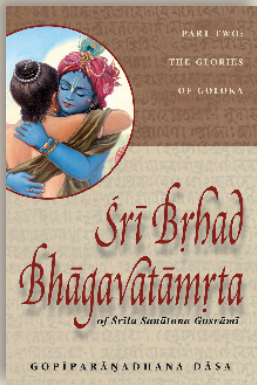
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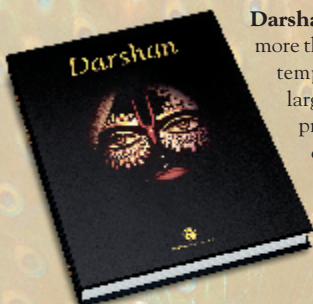


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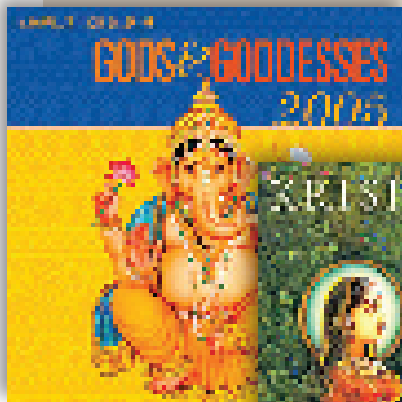


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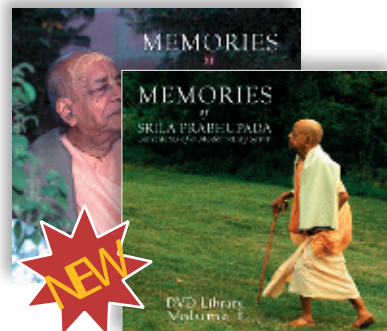
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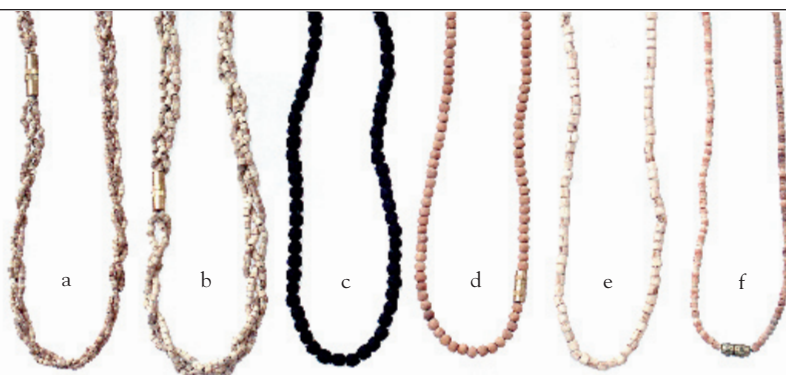
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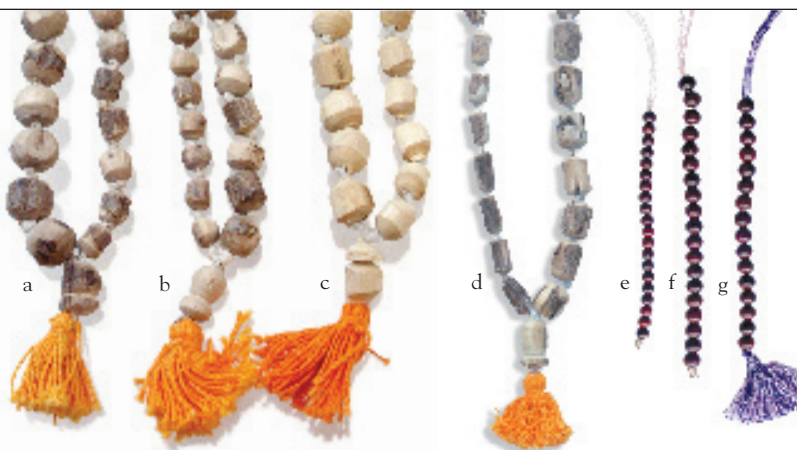
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Mantra Meditation



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- e) Natural, regular (16") **\$3.95** N3JT671
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- d) Tulasi Japa Beads (extra-large) **\$15.95** #KCGJ607

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Vedic Thoughts

If one is under the bodily conception, he is unable to realize his true identity and engage in the loving devotional service of the Lord. Unless one comes to the transcendental position, he cannot expect the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord, nor can he cross over the vast ocean of material nescience.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,
Madhya 6.235, Purport

The holy names of Kṛṣṇa are not temporary objects that are subject to creation and annihilation within the jurisdiction of time. Since there is no material difference between the names of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself, the form of Kṛṣṇa, which is the personified source of time, and His holy names are at all times the undivided Truth.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya 1.148,
Commentary

An intelligent person who understands the distinction between material bondage and liberation ends all material bondage when he understands the supremely worshipable Personality of Godhead, who is full of all powers and opulences.

Katha Upaniṣad 1.2.22

One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55

The Personality of Godhead is pure, being free from all contaminations of material tinges. He is the Absolute Truth and the embodiment of full and perfect knowledge. He is all-pervading, without beginning or end, and without rival. O Nārada, O great sage, the great thinkers can know Him when completely freed from all material hankerings and when sheltered under undisturbed conditions of the senses. Otherwise, by untenable arguments, all is distorted, and the Lord disappears from our sight.

Lord Brahmā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.40–41

The Vedic mantras explain that the all-powerful Absolute Truth possesses a spiritual form, and although He remains in the spiritual sky, He is simultaneously present everywhere. He personally appears within the heart of the perfect devotees who constantly meditate upon Him.

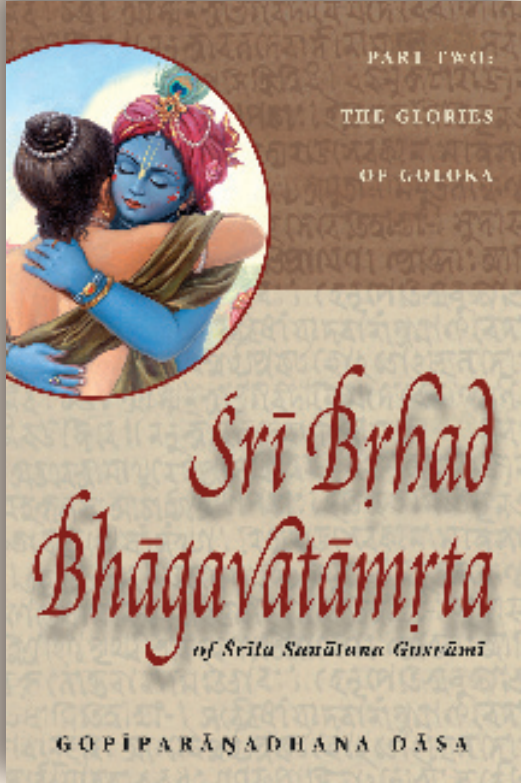
Śrīla Bālaḍeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa
Prameya Ratnāvalī 1.13(b)

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—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness